JULIA ST. HELEN,

A NOVEL.

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JULIA ST. HELEN;

OR,

THE HEIRESS OF ELLISBOROUGH.

A NOVEL:

IN TWO VOLUMES.

Published by SARAH COBBE,

RELICT OF THE REV. RICHARD CHALONER COBBE,

RECTOR OF BRADENHAM IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE,

AND CHAPLAIN TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE

THE EARL OF MOIRA.

VOL. II.

London:

Printed by J. NICHOLS, *Earl's-Court, Leicester-Square*;

SOLD BY EARLE AND HEMET,

NO. 47, ALBEMARLE-STREET, PICCADILLY.

1800.

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JULIA ST. HELEN.

LETTER XXVI.

Julia St. Helen to Lady Jane Forester.

THE post, as usual, brought letters from Paris. I always retired, in order to read the contents of mine in secret, while Fanny went through hers. Had I *not* had one myself, I should even then have retired, as Lady Clanville would fix her eyes upon me, during any conversation relative to her brother, and confuse me in such a manner, that I absolutely dreaded the subject. Just as I had committed the *dear* paper to my pocket-book, Fanny ran to me, with great glee, saying: "Dear, dear Miss Julia,

papa is going to send me a great many beautiful things from Paris by Miss Mellish—a pair of pearl bracelets, because you say I play very-well on the harp. She comes in a month, and as soon as she leaves London, will come and visit us. Papa says she has sixty thousand pounds, and that we shall like her very much; but here is my letter; do, read it." His former letter had informed me of her return to England, and that she lived at Ellisborough-Hall; so that I dreaded an interview more than you can conceive, as she certainly would recollect the adventure of my going to be hired. I determined, at all events, to be absent, whenever this visit should take place; yet I felt the greatest satisfaction at learning that she was about to quit the hotel where Sir Francis resided. I was always extremely uneasy at her being there, though at the same time, I had such unbounded confidence in him, that I cannot say I was *absolutely* wretched. Nevertheless, I would frequently spend whole hours in tears, without being able to

say *positively* to myself why I did so. But Fanny's news of Miss Mellish's return soon lightened my heart—I was in excellent spirits. Taking my place at the harpsichord, I was beginning a favorite tune, when Lady Clanville came in and seated herself by the instrument. I observed that she appeared wholly burried in thought. Dinner did not produce any alteration, for she tasted little or nothing, and called for coffee as soon as the cloth was removed. Fanny and I asked her several questions, to which she always answered "Yes," without knowing to *what*. The child laughed at these answers, as they were very ridiculous to two or three queries. For instance, "Pray, aunt, are all the Jews christians?" "Yes," said Mylady. The servants tittered. Presently after, a flock of sheep passed the road, which was within sight of the house. "Pray, where are those sheep going to?" said Fanny. I answered: "To the London market."—"Why, aunt, do they put them in the stage? they can never walk it, pretty

dears; do they go by the stage?" "Yes" was the reply. The child had been severely reprimanded the day before by Lady Clanville, for laughing at a mispronunciation of hers; but to-day, the question and the laugh were alike unnoticed.

Immediately after Allan, her woman, had dined, she came into the parlour and said: "I am ready, My Lady." Her mistress poured out a glass of wine and gave it her, when, rising from her chair, she, to my great surprise, slung her arm through her maid's, and they departed the room together. At quitting it, she was more gracious to me than she had been during the whole of her visit to her niece. "My dear Miss Julia," said she, "when it is agreeable to you to have tea, send for me." I was astonished at *such* an address; but, as she had condescended to lean on her maid's arm, I attributed this to a sudden effort of good-humor. They continued together till seven o'clock (two good hours) when she joined us at tea, in wonderful spirits, after which, she proposed an airing,

and bringing Mr. Ford and sister home to supper. This, however, I contrived to evade, by informing her that the cook and three other servants were gone to the fair. For three or four days, there was this friendly intercourse between the Lady and the maid, when going past Lady Clanville's apartment, I saw Allan on her knees, before a great trunk, packing up clothes. It struck me that she was preparing to set off for London, as this visit was paid *in the way to town:* but as she did not mention any thing of it, when we met at dinner, I bade Fanny ask her aunt, Whether she was going to lose her? "No, my love," said Lady Clanville, "I am sending Allan over to Paris, to purchase lace, silks, feathers and flowers: I cannot trust my brother to buy articles, which he can be no judge of. This is an excellent opportunity, as she may return with Miss Mellish, without any danger of being searched, as Sir Francis can get a passport from our ambassador there."

"Lord bless me," said Fanny, "what can *you* do with feathers and flowers?

"A great deal, child; more than you or any other person can conceive," answered her Ladyship. Allan came in, when her mistress repeated the question and the answer. The maid joined her lady in a very hearty laugh, and added: "Yes, Miss Banmore, I *hope*, and *believe*, these feathers and flowers will do a great deal, I assure you. *If* they *don't*, it *shan't* be *my* fault." Her mistress gave her a nod of approbation, and she quitted the room with the work she had come for. Incapable as I was of suspicion or duplicity, this conversation passed without my making any comment upon it, even in thought. I only envied the woman for going such a journey. She would be beneath the very roof that held *all* that was dear to *me*. She would see him—hear him—converse with, and be protected by, him. I wisely determined not to say one word to Allan about her going, or even to give her the smallest parcel or commission.

Two days after this intelligence, which, by ruminating in my own mind, added to my anxiety, a letter came from Paris, directed by a woman's hand. Lady Clanville had not yet risen, so that I studied the hand, and also the seal, *because it* was a Parisian letter. When she awoke, she called for her breakfast, which, after giving her the letter, I made in the adjoining room. Soon after, I heard her exclaim: "My God! Fanny; your father has broke his leg." I believe I fainted away, as I found myself upon the carpet, quite alone, and unable to rise; but, to my great relief, Nurse Thomas entered the room, with a letter from Sir Francis, written after this accident, with his *own hand.* A sudden thought struck me, and placing my finger upon my lips, in token of silence, I put my arm through hers, and led her down stairs, out at the garden-gate, to her own dwelling, where having gained the threshold, I turned and bolted the door, to indulge myself in a torrent of tears, while

I read the following proofs of his tenderness.

" My dearest life, every thing is coming about with my sister. My leg is set; be assured I am in no danger. Let nothing lead you to betray the interest you take in this unfortunate event—it would ruin all. Be extremely cautious for God's sake! Eternally, my beloved sympathising angel —eternally yours

FRANCIS BANMORE.

P. S. In case of the worst, my adored girl will know what has always been the heart of her

F. B.

How amiable, my dear Lady Jane, was this attention to *my* sufferings! In the midst of his excruciating pains, he thought of lessening the pangs he *knew* I *must* feel. His own were forgotten in the humane idea of softening mine, or rather the anticipation of my agony added to his own

pains a *new* and more exquisite torment. Dearest and most beloved of human beings! in the most fervent prayer do I invoke the Almighty Father to keep thee ever ignorant of my wrongs. No, never shall that happiness I so ardently pray for be imbittered by the vindication of a wretch abandoned to despair. Yes, in this moment, my bleeding heart cherishes the hope that Miss Mellish *may* study, as I *had* done, to make your life as blessed as the imperfect state of humanity can possibly admit of.

His dear letter bade me conceal my emotion. Alas! was this *possible?* 'Tis the injunction of a tyrant, said I: the privilege of weeping is the only luxury I can enjoy, and he forbids it! Cruel, inhuman Banmore!—"Unjust Miss Julia, his love for you alone prompts him to advise you to conceal it."—"Oh! my dear nurse, I know it all; but *you* feel not what *I* feel—you cannot—Alas! I feel all his tortures as acutely as the dear sufferer himself."

I planned with nurse, that she should

feign a sudden illness. Every one knew my regard for her, and therefore, my swoln eyes would excite no wonder at my return, and this would furnish me with a plausible excuse for absenting myself from the great house, till I had sufficient time to compose my agitated spirits. She really seconded my scheme, and this excellent friend soothed me by every consolation in her power—read over his comforting letter twenty times, and succeeded in some degree in giving a calm to my troubled breast.

As the evening approached, little Fanny, whose sunshine never knew the eclipse of one hour together, came to enquire after me, and bring the news of her father's accident. He had just mounted that vile Roan horse he had purchased, when Count de Frere arrived upon a most spirited Arabian to show his dexterity. They were both upon their mettle, and therefore forgot all prudence. The mob shouted their applauses, and the Roan threw its rider to a considerable distance. The

fracture was a compound one, and the surgeons apprehended he would be lame all his life. My tears accompanied every word she uttered; but, as they must have fallen for a stranger, when the child of that stranger made the relation, they could make no particular impression upon Fanny. "Mrs. Allan," added she, "set off this morning to go and nurse papa, and my aunt says, She will write and make him come home, for that she can refuse him nothing. I do not know what she means, but I am sure papa does not stay away because she bids him."

What intelligence for me! I swallowed every syllable, till my breath was quite short. I pretended nurse called me, and I made my escape up stairs, to recover myself. When I got up to *her*, I only waved my hand, to keep her silent—drank some cold water—rubbed my pale cheeks with a napkin, and went down again. Yet, with all this, the dear affectionate girl said: "How pale you look, my dear Miss Julia! Do, pray, come home, and let me nurse you.

If nurse gets better in the evening, will you come to-morrow?" She returned with my assurance, that if I could, I would attend her next day.

It required some time before the hurry of my spirits could subside, and allow of my thinking rationally upon any one subject. I was distressed to a degree how to convey a line. At length, I thought of a stratagem to let him know how sincerely I partook of his pains, without even awakening the suspicions of any human creature. I desired Fanny to inform her Father, That Julia would have written a receipt for the imbrocation, if she imagined that he would be *able to read it himself*; but till *then*, she was afraid to do it, as the ignorance of the French surgeons might make them apply it *wrong*. On second thoughts, she says, She would write, did not her concern for a friend, who is very ill, unfit her for every thing.

I knew he would understand this article in a sense different from what any other person would do, and I felt quite relieved

at the success of my idea. It was of such infinite ease to my harrassed mind, that I was able to fulfil my extorted promise to Fanny, whom I now loved with a fonder, more tender affection than ever.

I *cannot* fill this second sheet, but remain, &c.

JULIA ST. HELEN.

LETTER XXVII.

The same to the same.

I NOW, in the few moments when hope usurped the dominion which fear had almost continually on my imagination, *saw* him recover—*saw* him return, and *saw* all my sorrows vanish in being united to a being whose happiness constituted mine—whose disposition, pursuits and temper were so eminently calculated to make me

happy. Ye fond, ye flattering illusions, ye are no more!—Alas! do I *yet* live, to regret ye?

How beautifully delicate was his concealment of the provision he had made for me! He thought my sensibility would feel a weight of obligation, which would distress me. Often would I fly to solitude and exclaim: "Yes, best and dearest of men, I glory in your attachment! My whole life shall be one incessant endeavour to reward you—Julia St. Helen will repay the blessings she receives—every moment of her existence shall be devoted to the enviable task of pleasing *thee*—We will tread the paths of peace together, waiting the calm approaches of age, which by thus tenderly esteeming each other, will but represent a second spring—The habits of Religion shall bind our virtuous souls in one link, and point our path to heaven." At such a moment, I compared my sorrows to a passing cloud, when the sun breaks forth, and gilding its watery skirts with a faint gleam, promises a day of brightness.

But, even in such a moment of apparent good, my heart would check its transports, and humbly say: "If it be *thy* will, Thou, Sovereign Good, to dash my cup with disappointment, *thy* will, not *mine* be done! If the completion of my fondest wish should warp my soul from thee, contract my heart, and wean my mind from virtue, then exert thy mercy, and *keep* me *poor* and *humble!*"

Lady Clanville had letters daily. One would inform her, That the fever ran so high that they dreaded the worst; the next, That his spirits were so low that he spent whole days in tears. I grew so thin with this cruel anxiety, that every body was shocked to see me. I was wretched at the Mellishes continuing at Paris, fearing lest their attentions to him at *such* a period, might give birth to more gratitude than I wished Sir Francis to *feel* for an amiable woman, while *I* was so far distant. Allan could nurse him, but not converse, or amuse him. I saw the necessity of his having society, and yet, though I was

conscious that the health I would have given worlds to restore would be benefited by it, I could not help repining inwardly at his enjoying it. I got a cough which tormented me night and day. I never slept ten minutes together, without awaking in such tremors and frights, that I was worse for the transient sleep. At the end of the fifth week, I began to expect a letter, as Lady Clanville heard that he was up—day succeeded day, but *no* letter. At length *one* in his own hand-writing came to his sister. My bounding heart trusted there was one for me at nurse's; off I set . . . to meet with disappointment. Every day, as the post arrived, I set forward on the same errand . . . . . in search of neglect. This trial was too severe, the torture too extreme for human nature to support. Hysteric fits, which were so violent, that they lasted two and three hours together, wore me down to a shadow. Lady Clanville endeavoured to persuade me to go to Bristol, or Bath; or, if I would try my native air, she would pay all expences.

Never was friend more urgent, more anxious for my health—my heart expanded, and I felt grateful to *his* sister for an act of *kindness*, as I then thought, but which time has proved to have been of the most consummate *cruelty*. The hope of hearing *of* him, when I had given up that of hearing *from* him, rivetted me to the spot. Never was a creature apparently more affectionate than this infernal woman. She made me drink ass's milk, compelled me to take an airing twice a-day, and continually watched my pulse, to mark the progress of my low consuming fever. Oh! Lady Jane, *seven months* did I endure this barbarous silence! . . . ,

It was now one year and eleven months, since I had *seen* him, when Lady Clanville came into my apartment, where I was pillowed up in an arm-chair, while I corrected my dear Fanny's Italian lesson, and with much satisfaction, said: "Fanny and JULIA ST. HELEN will *both* wish me joy; my brother sets out this day, on his return home."? Infinitely too weak to have any

controul over my emotions, I fell lifeless on the floor.—When they had recovered me, I said; "I am grown so feeble, that the least thing flurries me." My dearest girl shed her ineffectual tears over me, while the *friend*, her aunt, begged of me to repose all my confidence in *her*. She was convinced my disorder was of the mind, and I might depend upon her friendship. She again endeavoured to persuade me to try change of air, if only as far as Miss Ford's: I, however, evaded these proposals. I trusted in heaven that Sir Francis would justify his unkind silence in a manner satisfactory to my mind, and I determined to make a pretext on the morrow, for continuing a few days with nurse, as I knew I could not suppress a degree of tumult upon his arrival, which from my heart I wished should not be remarked even by him, till he had done away my just resentments, and solicited my pardon. Confident that he *could* and *would* do both, I felt myself sufficiently well to attend supper. After the cloth

was removed, Fanny was desired to pull the bell; the butler came in, when Lady Clanville ordered wine to be given to every servant in the house, to drink health and happiness to . . . . . Sir Francis and Lady Banmore!!!

O my friend! I am sensible of the feeling sympathising drops which will moisten this paper, as you trace its contents, if my own tears will leave it legible. If grief *could* kill, I could not have *related* this trial. How many hours I remained after this shock I know not. The first recollection I had came late one night, when I found myself in bed, in the dark—in a strange house. The idea of nurse never occurred to me. I now suppose, that in my first delirium and paroxysm of grief, without any design in my head, I must have put on my clothes, and some way or other, got out of the house. What became of me at the time, I am still ignorant of. The first consciousness I felt of *self* was being seated at Mrs. Millar's table, whose face I *even* did not know. She gave me,

as I verily believe, so large a dose of wine, that it effected a temporary return to reason. She called out to somebody: "She is *not* an idiot; come down stairs; she is *not* an idiot." I also remember, that she placed me in a coach and carried me to the house you have seen in John Street; but whether it was on that day, or a month after, I have not the smallest recollection. She also bade a servant go immediately to her *cousin*, to announce her arrival.

Every day, I got some lucid intervals from idiotism; sometimes I had a whole hour, when a confused notion that somebody was dead would be haunting me. I *knew* there was something to be wretched at, yet could not make out *what*. But I was soon roused from this lethargy of my senses by the cruelty—no, I may say, kindness, of this woman; for a violent blow on my arm brought me to reflection, and, to my utter astonishment, I heard her say: "I'll bear it no longer—I *will* have my rent." I make no doubt that I had often been treated in this manner before;

for, my arms, which till now I was inca pable of observing, were quite black with bruises. She vociferated the same demand several times, accompanied by a push, or a blow, but I made neither complaint nor reply, and soon after fell asleep. When I awoke I found that my head was clearer and better than it had been for a long time The past became present. On a sudden, I recollected the last scene at Sir Francis Banmore's, and that I had left the house, unknown to any body—that I had a very fine watch, a gold repeater, with some very valuable trinkets—likewise a large diamond ring, which Fanny, at her father's desire, had presented me with, and which had belonged to her mother—also some money—a chased smelling-bottle, which had been poor Lady Ellisborough's, and which I had preserved through the wreck of all my fortune, because it was her's. I sat up in bed to seek my picture, but it was in vain. I *resolved* to make a memorandum of these articles, from feeling conscious that I should forget them in the morning,

but my pocket-book was gone also. The only *one* remaining thing, however, was to me the most valuable—the little unadorned hair-ring, which *could not* come off my finger. My recollection remained perfect, and when Mrs. Millar appeared, I asked her for these articles. In the most desperate rage imaginable, she quitted her chair, and calling on heaven to witness her perjury, protested she had *never* seen them. "You, vile wretch," said she, "what a a villanous bad heart must you have, to accuse your benefactress of theft! I found you on the road full six weeks ago, almost perished for want, a disgrace to your sex, for nothing but a profligate life could have brought you to this. But, in this deplorable condition, you must have a trumpery fine gown on your back, dizened out with a thousand flaunting gewgaws, to attract notice, though your face looked for all the world like a white-washed wall, and your bones were coming through your burnt-up skin. Honesty's the best policy, say I. Had you been born of honest parents, you

had been brought up in a different manner, I warrant you. Pay me my rent, I say, this instant, pay my rent, and board too. Who do you think has clothed you? If you have any relations, they are beggars, I'll be bound—they'll not pay me. —But to Bridewell you shall go, unless you hit on some means to pay me, you poor, forlorn, friendless wretch!"

"Too true," said I—My God! is there yet another persecution for me?"

—"Aye, child; *prosecutions* are nothing to husseys of your trade. Pretty art you have practised upon me indeed; but I'll make you pay, never trust me if I don't."

—"Oh! spare me, spare me; the conflict is almost over—death will soon release me."

—"Then out you shall *tramp*, I assure you—I did not take you for nothing. I thought you would eat, drink, get hearty, and turn yourself to some account, or you might have lain till now where I picked you up."

—"O heavens! for what am I reserved?"

—"Oh! you know well enough—for Bridewell, or a town-house and handsome carriage, with as smart a gentleman as ever trod shoe upon ground. Many a girl would give her ears to be noticed by such a one."

—"Upon my word, I do not understand you."

—"Then I'll make you understand me, I warrant—You shall either beat hemp, till my debt is paid, or walk up stairs and dress yourself in that jewel of a white silk gown which lies on the bed, and take a nice little walk with my other young ladies. I have some noblemen, relations of mine, to sup with me, and all *my* family *must* be in high dress—your not attending to what I said made me strike you."

—"Can you ask me to walk, when you see me almost unable to stand? You know I cannot, nor would I be seen by any gentleman in this terrible situation for the world."

—" What situation impudence? Do you mean to cast a reflection upon my house?"

—" Indeed I meant the situation of my health. I am a stranger to you, and do not even know your name."

—" Millar is my name, and I'll make every bone in your skin tremble at the name of Millar, if you don't pay my rent. I protest, as I hope for mercy, I will only give you two hours to determine. Either dress yourself handsomely, and make yourself agreeable to the gentlemen, my cousins, or I'll drag you to beat hemp at Bridewell."

Several double raps at the door procured me my dismission, and I was ordered up stairs, to contemplate the fineries which I had been solicited to wear. When I beheld them, my heart shrunk within me—I had formerly heard that there were infamous houses in London, where ignorant young women were drawn by old haradans, who compelled them to support their extravagance, by leading a life of profligacy. I

shuddered at the thought—and exclaimed: "What shall I do? Father of Mercies! extricate an unfortunate creature from this abyss of misery." I surveyed the gown on the bed, it seemed little the worse for *wear*, but a blotch of grease covered the whole body—wine had been spilt on it in several places, and it smelt of tobacco—a gauze trimming was half torn, and the sleeve pinned in. A pair of white sattin slippers, without any heel-pieces, lay by it, together with a pair of white silk stockings without any feet. Turning from this scene in disgust, I resolved to fly this horrid abode, and was in the very act of descending the staircase, when a loud rap at the street-door compelled me to go back. The person who entered immediately asked: "Well! how is she?" "Mending apace," answered Mrs. Millar; "had you come five minutes sooner, you would have found her sitting with me."

I was convinced that both question and answer related to *me*, as no other person had been sitting in Mrs. Millar's parlour.

I will not attempt to describe the sensations this enquiry produced in me; that were impossible. They both went into the adjacent room; but, as they did not shut the door, and Mrs. Millar usually sat opposite to it, I was obliged, for the present, to postpone my design of escape. Notwithstanding this disappointment, I continued at the head of the stairs, in anxious hope that some favorable opportunity would offer; but, after a full hour, which weariness and impatience made me think as long as twelve, I was forced to give up my scheme; for, I heard a sort of bustle below, with a moving of chairs and a hearty laugh. "Trust to me," said Mrs. Millar, "I shall do my part well, I warrant you; my patience, I swear, is quite exhausted; if she don't come down, I'll even hobble up stairs."

"Hush," whispered a person; "you will alarm her." "Stuff and nonsense," said she; "if you stand on the fear of alarming, there's nothing to be done, I assure you. Alarm does her good; she'd have

been an idiot to this hour, if I had not rouzed her by making her believe I was in a passion." "I think I forbad you," said the stranger, "to use any violence whatever. If she retains her former disposition, mildness *may* succeed, but severity *never*. Indulge her in every thing; you know I never wish to spare any expence," This was said only in a loud whisper, so that I could form no idea of the speaker by the sound of his voice.

"I am sure her surprise at seeing you would do her no harm," answered Mrs. Millar. "Come and sup with us, for I insisted on her being one of the company."

—"Then, thank heaven! I have discovered it in time—nothing short of ruin would have been the consequence—I would not have other eyes behold her for millions. Now, you know I would play the devil with your house, if you deceived me."

—"Lord! I thought a little merriment would do her good; but you know I love to oblige you your own way." "Step up,"

said the visitor, "and tell me how she looks, for I must begone."

My tremor was now so excessive, when I heard her feet upon the stairs, that gliding into the room I sunk upon the bed. As she entered, she exclaimed: "Lord bless us! not dressed yet! Well, with all my heart; do as you like, my dear"—when, beholding my face paler than death, she cried out: "Hartshorn, for God's sake! bring hartshorn, water, any thing, she is dying."

Inspired with an almost miraculous strength, and dropping on my knees, "For mercy's sake," said I, "let nobody come in—I shall die, if you do." In this condition I beheld— —Colonel Mollineux!!! He approached, and applied the hartshorn to my nose. Sudden indignation revived me—and I pushed it away with contempt, while he affected the utmost astonishment at *discovering* so unexpectedly the *amiable* object of his *unalterable* attachment. He attempted to kiss my hand, which I absolutely wrenched from

his touch, and springing up with an agility *such* an attempt from *such* a wretch inspired, I darted towards the door, with the design of running down stairs, and out of the house; but the horrid woman, perceiving my intention, instantly placed herself against the lock, and declared I should not quit the room, until I made an apology for my extraordinary behaviour *to her particular friend.*"

"Miss St. Helen's conduct," said he, "is perfectly right, while appearances are so strong against me: but I rely upon your usual candor, my dear, my beloved Julia, to acquit me of any design of indelicacy in thus introducing myself into your apartment. As a proof of this, I call every saint in heaven to witness, that nothing less than Mrs. Millar's exclamation could have brought me up stairs."

"I'll take my oath," said his infamous friend, "that you did *not* know she was under my roof—you entered the house not three minutes ago, when I was half way up stairs."

"Had I imagined," resumed he, "that

Miss St. Helen had been in town, I would have done myself the honor of paying my respects here before now, and enquiring after a health so infinitely dear to me—How unfortunate I am! You doubt me, my amiable friend—I see you do."

—"If your own heart, Colonel, acquits you, *it* will make you ample amends for the distrust you perceive in *my* countenance. If *it* condems you, Sir, *my* silent reproaches will be the least part of your pain. Mrs. Millar, let *your friend*, Colonel Mollineux pass; *he*, I presume, is no prisoner here."

"Neither are *you*, my dearest Miss St. Helen," he replied. "Unhappy as I am by incurring your displeasure, and creating suspicions so injurious to my honor and repose, yet I only exist in the hope of rendering you service, and of being suffered to devote my life to you—my heart and fortune have long been at your disposal."

—"I rejected them at the *first* offer, Sir, with the highest sense of obligation and gratitude. If I feel different sensations

now, they are produced by my present situation. Since I am *no* prisoner here, I *choose* to go down." At this Mrs. Millar set her arms a-kimbo, and assured me, "She was no such fool;" but Colonel Mollineux silenced her by a look, and ordered her to open the door. I rushed out of the room, and descended the stairs with the utmost velocity, when the Colonel stopped my career by pretending he must clear his conduct before he suffered me to leave the house. I exerted my whole strength, but in vain; Mrs. Millar, by this contrivance, had already placed her back against the street-door, while her infamous accomplice forced tears from his eyes, at the doubts I entertained of his honor. "Let me conjure you," said he, "my dearest Miss Julia, to attend to my solemn asseverations—suspicion is not natural to Miss St. Helen."

"Indeed, Sir," I replied, "it is not. The thorough confidence which I once placed in your honor, could not have been removed by the reports of the world; had they been unfavorable, I should from my

heart have believed them to be false; being the unfortunate object of slander *myself*, I want to have more than ordinary proof, before I condemn others. Be assured that nothing less than *my* having overheard part of your conversation could have produced this change in my sentiments—and now, Sir, I demand my liberty." He felt himself detected, and the consciousness of his guilt crimsoned his countenance.

"Sure, you mean," said the woman, "to pay your debts, first? No liberty will be granted by me, until every halfpenny is paid." "Trust me," said I, "I will appropriate every thing my labor produces to discharge your demands. I mean to work, that I may be just." Recovering himself, the Colonel again proceeded to vindicate his conduct.

"Notwithstanding my dear Miss St. Helen's error," said he, "in imagining that any conversation relative to her passed between us, Mrs. Millar, she shall suffer no inconvenience upon that score."

He again went over the same ground, and appealed to his *friend* in support of his false assertions, which she did with many oaths and protestations. She then tried to push me into the parlour, which the Colonel no longer opposed. But, as I struggled against this violence, she absolutely took me up in her arms, and carried me into the room, telling the Colonel, "She left it to him to put me into *sorts* again, for I was the worst tempered creature she ever beheld." So saying, she turned the key on the outside, although she had already secured that of the street-door, by putting it into her pocket.

"My God!" cried I, in extreme agony, "what unknown crime is this humiliation to punish?" He attempted to soothe me with protestations of his inviolable affection, which he said led him to acts of desperation. My rejecting his offers in the haughty manner I had just done had determined the plan he was to pursue. He could not live without me, but it was still in my power to make my

own terms, and whatever they should be, he would accede to them. "These then," said I, "are my terms, Sir; Give me my liberty. If *ever* you really loved me, if my friendship was *ever* the object of your ambition, or my good opinion of consequence to your repose, preserve the innocence of one, who, though she can brave misfortune without murmuring, will perish sooner than submit to infamy."

He conjured me to believe that my happiness was dearer to him than his own. "Then, Sir," said I, "prove that assertion to be true, by acting in conformity to it. Rescue me from impending infamy, by compelling that woman to let me depart her house—I *must*, I *will* go this instant—" "Patience," interrupted he, "patience, my dear Miss St. Helen. I own I am amazed at your extraordinary apprehensions, when you are under the protection of a man who will preserve you from her insults. Suffer *me*, whose friendship will never fail you, to plan every thing for your present satisfaction and future accom-

modation. Mrs. Millar is known and respected by many worthy people—I do not say that the woman is polished—no, far from it; she is excessively vulgar; but vulgarity does not preclude a good heart."

—"No, Sir, nor polished manners proclaim *one*. I have known very severe afflictions, Colonel, but the hour of mortification was left till now."

My indignation made me half frantic. Passion, contempt, abhorrence, kept me alive to all my injuries, while this detested man used all his rhetoric to induce me to pursue gentle means with Mrs. Millar, to whom he was indebted in a very large sum. "Let me entreat you, my dearest, most adored Julia, let me entreat you to repose your confidence in me, and every thing shall be settled to your satisfaction. If you dislike your present residence, let us seek one less exceptionable."

—"As there is no crime in poverty, Sir, I mean to seek my bread in the only possible way of obtaining it with *honor*. The labor of my own hands shall procure it.

If the wretched woman who owns this house is determined to detain me, I will accept your offer of assistance so far as to become your debtor for the sum, provided you give me your solemn promise to receive it the instant I have earned sufficient to repay the loan. For heaven's sake," added I, "do not trifle in this barbarous manner. Exert your influence with that detested woman, and purchase to yourself that sweetest of all satisfactions, the having rescued an innocent and unfortunate creature from ruin."

He re-urged the argument of "patience," and proposed my going to stay with a relation of his at Hampstead, till he could satisfy Mrs. Millar, to whom he said I had certainly taken a most unreasonable dislike. His affairs, he protested, were so particularly embarrassed, that he did not know which way to turn for money; that, however, he could give her a note at six weeks—Observing the alteration in my countenance, at the pitiful subterfuges he had recourse to, he added: "That he lived

but to serve me, and his carriage should wait my orders, at nine o'clock, that very evening; in the mean time, he would undertake to have me most respectably lodged, till I had finally settled what plan to adopt." My tears flowed in torrents on perceiving that I could gain no ground with a man of so despicable a character. After a very long speech which he made, and during which I endeavoured to stand collected, with as firm a voice as I could command, I replied: "I have heard you, Sir, without interruption, and . . . "

"Not without interruption, Miss St. Helen," he answered, "Yours has been the most forcible of all interruptions; you have shed tears, every one of which has brought an answering drop from my heart. I have proposed the only possible way of managing this affair to your credit. At nine, my carriage shall attend you."

—"At nine! No, Sir; let open daylight witness the protection you afford a persecuted individual. Cause the doors to be unlocked, and let me *this instant* de-

part this house of infamy, in comparison of which *my prison* is a palace."

"I understand your reproach," replied he, "and cannot help saying that I think it extremely ill-timed. But, upon my soul, Madam, you unfit me for rational discourse, while you continue in the heroics. I will own that I have used some little degree of artifice, in trying to blind your eyes about Mrs. Millar's character, because I thought it would make you wretched to know that your own had been slandered, from being a boarder in her infamous house. Every thing I have done has been contrived with this friendly motive; but, when I see your doubt of my word, distrust of my honor, and want of confidence in my integrity, I am compelled to tell you what I had hoped to conceal. And now, give me, I beseech you, every attention, for I have much to say." He spoke this with such apparent feeling, that I almost reproached myself with having entertained doubts of his honor. In the most bitter anguish of heart, I replied;

"I have long learned to submit to my fate; this new stroke is scarcely perceived amid so many calamities." He seated me, without any opposition on my part—every hope of peace had fled my bosom—at length, I gave way to a torrent of tears, while he not only undid every favorable impression he had just created in my mind, but confirmed with his own tongue my conviction of his premeditated baseness."

"Having said thus much," added he, "to my dearest Miss St. Helen, I must now, as a true friend, lay open the particulars of her situation. The world knows of your being a resident in this very improper house. Indeed it has been the subject of wonder and conversation in all companies. Sorry am I to add, that your own sex is particularly severe to each other under such circumstances. You need not be told that they will, one and all, relinquish your acquaintance, and you will allow that the good opinion of the world is the very first thing necessary to secure our own happiness. In such a situation, I dare propose

an alleviation to your sufferings, by repeating that my house and fortune solicit you to become their mistress and disposer—from this moment, be sole arbitress of me and mine."

"If the good opinion of the world," I answered, "is, as you justly observe, of such consequence to our happiness, how infinitely more so is the approbation of our own mind! Deserted, calumniated, and pennyless, yet I will not lose the hope of obtaining at length a degree of calm composure. But, did my mind condemn me, not all the riches of the East would wash away the remembrance of guilt. I endeavour, Sir, to restrain my just indignation—indeed expression would fail me. Once more, I intreat you to *protect*, not *persecute* a being, who is already but too wretched."

At this moment, a carriage came to the door. Mrs. Millar let in two gentlemen, and I exerted every faculty of my soul to make them compel the woman to unlock the parlour-door; but she had little to ap-

prehend from hearts which grew callous as they entered those walls. I heard them walk very deliberately into the drawing-room, where the young women always received company. In a few minutes, she entered the room, saying to Colonel Mollineux, That he was an angel of a man, to bear with my infernal temper, and that she was so heartily tired of having such an ungrateful thankless wretch under her roof, that, provided he would pay all expences, I should pack off that very night. As she said this, I saw her give him a wink, and make signs for him to take his hat. I now ran to him, and with tears implored him not to leave me, but to cause the street-door to be opened, that I might go wherever I pleased. Indeed I felt myself worked up to an almost state of phrenzy; for, this woman looked more infernal than it is possible for any body to conceive, who has not been in my situation. He assured me he would return in half an hour at farthest, with a draft and his carriage, to take me where I pleased to go to. But I

declared that nothing should tempt me to step into it. "You must *know* I will *not*," said I. "Never shall I step into a carriage of yours." This nettled him exceedingly, and he begged to hear my reasons for treating every proposal he made with such obstinate refusal. "Will you, *can* you, Miss St. Helen, give me *one* reason that is not founded on the most unreasonable caprice."

"One hundred," said I, "Sir; but one shall suffice—the cruel paragraph, which my involuntary visit to Bury-street gave rise to, would be justified, were I to be seen in your carriage, and I were deserving of censure, should any circumstance tempt me to enter it voluntarily."

—"Let me then, when I return with the draft, place you in a hackney-coach, and conduct you to whatever part of the town you chuse. Plan, my dearest girl, what you please, and behold me ready to obey your orders."

"Then cause the street-door to be *now* open, as I have desired a hundred times.

I am determined to walk. I will not set foot in any carriage, but go wherever I will, unmolested."

"Strange, infatuated girl!" said he—and again took his seat by the fire, assuming the most provoking indifference. "You delight," said I, "in seeing me wretched—I see you do." Irritated to an excess at his trifling and procrastination, which confirmed all my suspicions of his base designs, I gave a loose to the anguish of my heart, which was almost rent with the conflict of so many passions.

At length, he rose, and approaching me, said: Ah! Julia, you have conquered. I live but to obey my beloved friend. I will now give my draft to Mrs. Millar, and procure your liberty at the expence of my own, for I tell you my affairs are particularly embarrassed—get on your cloak in the mean time, and I wil obey your orders implicitly."

"Your heart," said I, "will approve this act as long as you live—I will not be a moment." I then hastened up stairs;

but, while I was about taking the miserable one she brought me to town in, out of the drawer, I heard the door locked upon me! —Every faculty seemed suspended—I sunk on the floor, without the power of shedding a tear—no contest of the past arose in my mind to procure one.

Some time after, two beautiful girls entered the room, with two covered plates, and some wine, which they tried to persuade me to taste. Exhausted with what I had gone through, from fear, anger and humiliation, my mind had gained a pause from agitation. I had been addressing my fervent petitions to heaven, and I then experienced that tranquillity which it inspires. The girls spoke kindly, and I conceived a faint hope that they would compassionate my distress. I addressed myself to the one whose countenance promised most favorably; but her poor mind was corrupted by vice, and she laughed in my face, while a conversation, mingled with oaths, passed between her and her unfortunate companion, who advised me to obey Mother Mil-

lar's commands at once, as then I should lead a very happy life. "I, also," said she, "was very obstreperous at first, but now I am as gay as a lark." A sigh which came from her heart contradicted the assertion. They left the provisions, and departed the room, turning the key on the outside.

This sigh of *hers* weighed on my heart, and by comparison I believed myself *less* wretched than she was. *My* conscience could not accuse me. 'Perhaps,' thought I, 'she is equally guiltless. The heart that sighed thus deeply must detest sin'—and I now pleased myself with the hope of benefiting this child of error by my misfortunes. This train of ideas was interrupted by the noise of somebody running up stairs in a great hurry. Presently I heard a person say: "Mother Millar would kill us, if we did not carry her the key—she made noise enough about the one you lost." I placed myself in a seat, and a welcome tear wetted my cheek—my heart was relieved. "I am unfortunate," said I; "but, misfortune shall not contaminate

my mind—*that* is still in my power." I heard the voice of mirth and jollity throughout the house, and felt grateful to Providence that I was suffered to be alone.

I had walked backwards and forwards in the room for a full hour, when setting my foot awry upon one of the knots in the deal-floor, I stumbled, and fell with some force against an old wooden box, which I was told held some discarded riding hats. My elbow was much hurt; but, on getting up, I discovered—heaven's bounty towards me! Joy, extacy, gratitude, hope, all together rushed into my heart—I beheld my treasure! I sunk on my knees in acknowledgement. It was the *very* key Mrs. Mil- had made *so much noise* about, and which I had heard her describe as being tied to a piece of a riband. With a trembling hand, I tried the lock, which opened with great ease. I withdrew the key and put it into my pocket. The clock struck three—My heart beat violently—I was determined to venture, but a fancied noise deprived me of motion. Soon after, Mrs. Millar

came into the room, and desired me to make myself comfortable; the Colonel loved me as his own eyes, and could make me as happy as the day was long. "I am going to market," continued she, "though so late in the day, for I have a great deal of company to sup here. You shan't come down, if you don't like it, though by-the by, you'll be with Colonel Mollineux at that time; he means to come to you at five." So saying, she quitted me, and called the two already mentioned girls to go with her. "We are ready," said they. From the bottom of my heart, I exclaimed: "Heaven in its mercy direct me—better to abscond and be charged with theft, than, by staying, be lost for ever. Alas! in either case, infamy *must* be my lot; but my mind *shall still* be guiltless, and *that* will support me." I now heard Mrs. Millar say, that she must first go to Oxford-market. I almost uttered aloud: "Providence, I thank thee! now I *will* escape." The *other* young ladies, as she called them, were engaged with company in the draw-

ing room—the moments were precious—through careless hurry, the door was *not* locked—I sallied forth, my knees trembling at every step—I got to the street-door — opened it — and half-shutting it again, walked away as fast as I was able—fear gave me strength.—As I got to the corner of Newman-Street, I beheld this infamous woman returning home—apprehension of being caught made me involuntarily (though I bless God for it) lay hold of your arm, Lady Jane, to screen me from her view—you turned round and said: "Young woman, you are extremely impertinent." I quickly answered: "You are my preserver," and instantly walked down Newman-Street, without once turning my head, but seeing in Oxford Street, a warehouse for ready-made linen, I stepped in. All the shopmen came to ask what I wanted to buy. I burst into tears—"Nothing," said I; "I come in search of employment, and will work for whatever you are disposed to give me." "Where do you live?" said one; "where

can we have a character of you?"—I am quite a stranger," I replied, " and have no friends in London."—" What! did you come for employment without a character? I'll advise you, my dear, to go back and fetch it, for, without a character, you'll never get salt to your porridge." A loud laugh followed this feeling speech. One of the shopmen presented me with a shilling, saying: " Upon my soul, I cannot help pitying her." At this momoment, you, my guardian angel and benefactress, entered the shop, not by accident, but prompted by the God *within.* You saw me weeping, and asked the cause; I answered, *keen distress.* You made no comment upon it, but surveyed me, while you made a purchase; then whispering to the General, you turned to me, gave me your card, and bade me follow the direction at four o'clock. As the General stepped out after you, he slipped a guinea into my hand. I had not the power to speak, but I addressed my inward prayer to the Almighty that he would reward you—

The act and the acknowledgement were both recorded in heaven.

I attended you at the appointed hour, and in answer to your questions, said: "I was a young woman come out of the country, having left my friends, for reasons I hoped you would not desire me to explain; and without knowing the danger of coming to London, unprotected, had got into a house, which, from what I had seen, I believed to be an infamous one. I gave you my reasons for thinking so, and you thought them just. When you asked me, Whether I had ever been in town before, I could not tell a falsehood, which had nigh turned the scales against me. You asked, "With whom?"—"With my aunt."—"Where is she?—"Dead."—"But where are the people you lodged with?" "The woman," I answered with evident tremor, because I saw you doubted me, "was a widow, and died in childbed soon after her husband." When you said: "I *fear*, young woman . . . ." I again appealed to heaven to interpose. I told you the debt

the woman claimed for rent, and by a detail wholly artless, recapitulated every thing I had already made known to you. After some moments of silence, you said: "Your looks, I own, corroborate your assertion. I, however, take you under very doubtful circumstances; nevertheless you shall be protected; but, if *ever* I discover that you have deceived me, expect the severest punishment. If you are innocent, this is *no* threat. I will advance you money sufficient to quiet the woman, and from this moment you are my servant. The General shall manage every thing, and not one in the family shall know your story. Merit my kindness by a worthy conduct, for if you fail in one point, I shall suspect you of every evil you tell me it is your wish to shun." You then bade me go and dine with the servants, but on my saying that I had no appetite, you added: "If you choose to remain here by the fire, you may, and I will speak to you again after dinner." I did so, and you returned with a spunge biscuit and a glass of wine, which were the only things I had tasted

that day. I now owned to you that I had no place to sleep in, no trunk to bring; yet having the General's bounty in my pocket, I could get the first, if you wished me to do so; but, feeling a humane interest for a stranger in my situation, you gave me permission to remain where I was. The General paid the vile Mrs. Millar seven guineas, and took her receipt, while by penny-post letters which threatened ruin to her infamous house, if she did not restore my picture, I at length obtained it, and without saying from whom, enclosed it to Miss Banmore.

You see, my dear Lady Jane, that every particular of my sad history is so strongly imprinted in my memory, that not one has escaped me in the relation. But, good God! what recollections! 'Tis very late, and I must break off. Can I devote my thoughts to any thing but gratitude for being what I am? 'Tis silence alone must give expression *here*. May a sweet sleep attend *you*, who have so generously procured such repose to your faithful,

JULIA ST. HELEN.

LETTER XXVII.

The same to the same.

AFTER I had the happiness of being fixed in your service, my loved *Mistress* and dearest friend, I sought to hide all the little advantages which I owed to my education. How ungenerous did I feel at suffering the General and you to converse in French before me, without informing you that I understood it! My blushes, at length, betrayed me, when I had been the subject of your partial encomiums; a remark from the General made tears succeed those blushes, and this convinced you that I was no stranger to the language. I owned that I understood it a *little*, and received the gentle reproof you *thought* I merited. You said, "I ought to have mentioned it, because I made myself acquainted with things you meant me to be

ignorant of." You then had recourse to Italian; I changed color, when General Harrington, with his usual good-humor, said: "Are we safe now, Signora Giulia? Aye, can we abuse you now without fear of detection?" "I will not deserve reproof a second time," I answered, "but be honest, and confess that I understand a *little* of that also." You asked me how I had acquired that knowledge, and I told you it was of a master of languages, who was frequently at my aunt's. It was true; one attended me for three years, at a guinea a week.

My complaints now encreased very much, though I used every method in the world to conceal them from your Ladyship. The apothecary you employed was an extremely good man: he conjured me to unburthen my heart to you, as he was certain I must have some great load there. I answered That if his supposition was well founded, I would keep it from a person who was always ready to share in every one's afflictions; nothing could prevail upon me to

make her acquainted with sufferings she could never remove. Wearied by my obstinacy, he, at length, said: "You now force me to tell you the truth; you are in the depth of a consumption, and nothing but a thorough confidence in a friend, to whom you will unburthen your heart, *can* save you—You must prevail upon yourself to do this." "Prescribe," said I, "change of air, medicine, diet, any regimen you please, and depend upon it, Sir, I will follow your orders; but your first prescription is such as I cannot comply with." He ordered me to live almost wholly in a carriage, and to have a great deal of air. Your goodness furnished me with many opportunities of doing this, but the frivolous excuses I constantly made caused my loved friend to accuse me of ingratitude, when the dread of being known by some casual acquaintance, for the daughter of Sir John Ellisborough, or the friend of Miss Banmore, was my only motive for declining those excursions and absenting myself from a society, which, at other times, had

so many charms for me. When the General proposed my going to his sister's, at Kensington, you wanted a man-servant. Several came, and among them was one who wore Sir Francis Banmore's livery. You bade me ask him the usual questions, before you saw him, but I was unable to execute your commands, and begging the housemaid to be my proxy, I desired her to enquire Whether old nurse Thomas was still living? The answer was That he did not know, as she was gone from the cottage to the place she formerly lived at, near Ellisborough-Hall, but in what county he could not tell. I then bade her tell him he would not do for the place. Here I deserved, and received a reprimand—you said I ought to have suffered my *mistress* to be the judge, before I presumed to give an answer.

I instantly wrote the following letter to Kent.

DEAR NURSE,

I am sure that, till you hear from my own lips the cause of my long silence, you

will accuse me of ingratitude, for leaving you in a state of anxiety about me. I can only say that this silence was necessary, and that it was out of my power to avoid it, as will be explained to you when we meet. If you can oblige me by coming to town as soon as possible after the receipt of this letter, I will gladly defray the whole expence, and only detain you as long as it is agreeable to yourself. I heard of your return to Kent within this half hour, which I sincerely rejoice at; for, had you still continued at the cottage, I never could have prevailed upon myself to write, lest any one should have learned that I still existed. I long for the moment of assuring you that I always am, dear Nurse, your obliged friend

JULIA ST. HELEN.

P. S. Direct to Miss Julia Thomas, at Mrs. Boringdon's, Kensington.

As the answer I received shows the benevolence of her heart in a degree beyond panegyric, I copy it word for word.

"God be praised, my dearest Lady, for your welcome letter. How could you be so unkind as to overlook me in the hour of your affliction? I am sure no one, high or low, had so much right to attend you, in distress of mind or body, as myself. To forget me, when you wanted a friend, was, I must say, Miss Julia, very unkind indeed.

"As I shall so soon see you, I will not enter into particulars in a letter. I was heartily glad to come back to Kent, for I could not 'bide to see Master, after his vile usage of you, who are only too good for him. Have a heart, my good Lady, you may get a better than he, with God's mercy. So prays your dutiful servant till death,

MARY THOMAS.

"P. S. I hear Lady Clanville and Mrs. Allan have had a sad ado. Mrs. Allan has left her place, and threatens to expose My Lady in a court of Justice, if she don't instantly pay a large sum of money, which *she* says

going to the French has cost her. How it will end God knows best. Mrs. Allan has sent me a post-letter, to say she wishes to lodge with me for two months certain; but I shall be off, for many reasons: as she is coming, she may 'bide with me till Thursday next, when, God willing, I shall set out for London."

Kensington air had a tolerable effect upon my health, but the humane attentions of the General's sister, who is worthy of the brother she belongs to, and the amusement her lovely little children afforded me, did me infinitely more service than air and medicine put together. They played about the room, and insensibly led me to forget myself. At length, the much desired hour of Nurse's entrance arrived, and though it gave me the truest satisfaction to see her, yet at the same time, it brought back the past too powerfully to my mind, to let my recovery make any progress. She carefully avoided every subject which glanced at Sir Francis, till I assured her

that nothing would relieve me so effectually as talking over the events which had happened since we parted.

"Indeed, Madam," said she, "you know not what you ask; so black and infamous a piece of villainy, I do suppose, was never acted in this world before. I would not have Lady Clanville's or her maid's sins upon my head—no, not for all they are worth. God turn their wicked hearts! say I, but they never can make you amends—no, not were they to leave you their last penny."

—"I am quite in the dark, nurse; surely there has been no art? Resolve me this quickly—Is there any treachery?—What do you allude to?"

—"Nothing else, my dear Lady, but art and treachery. My very hair stood on end when I heard it—but now talking won't alter it, and therefore, better let it alone, in my opinion."

—"Believe me, my good nurse, it would be balm to my mind to hear the relation of all you know—every thing. It

can be of no avail *now*, that is very true; but, if art has been practised against me, Sir Francis may *possibly* be less culpable than I have thought him, and *that* will be happiness. Should he be less guilty . . ."

—" Guilty! he is guiltless, Miss Julia —deceived by his wicked sister and her vile agent—trapanned into a hated marriage for money, as I will prove to you before I have done, if you still persist in wishing to hear what I am sure you seem unable to bear, till you get more strength."

I already seemed to breathe more freely. " O my God!" I exclaimed, " fortify my mind to bear this tide of joy! To find him *innocent* is such an excess of luxury! How cruelly have I injured him in thought! Begin to relate the circumstances, nurse, and I will endeavour to listen without interrupting you. If he really *is* innocent . . . . do, reassure me of that, first—What a weight is this persuasion off my heart!"

—" I'll be bound he is, my good Lady, from what I have heard from his valet, as

well as from that vile woman, Mrs. Allan, whose word upon any other occasion I should doubt. But I will endeavour to tell you every thing as I heard it. My letter told you that I expected this worthless creature for a few days. I knew she had quitted Lady Clanville's service in a huff, but did not know the cause. True it is rogues quarrel, that honest folks may come at their own. She was in high wrath at *something*, and it soon came out, for she began by abusing her mistress and taking her to pieces. 'Why, Mrs. Allan,' said I, 'what's the matter now? You used to be very thick with your Lady, and all at once, youv'e altered your tone.' 'Yes,' said she, 'I've reason enough to do so. You, Mrs. Thomas, shall be judge if I hav'n't, for sure never was poor creature so shamefully rewarded for services as I've been. Had she the least spark of honor or generosity, she would be ashamed to show her face; but howsomdever, a court of law shall soon compel her, I can tell her *that*; while there's law or lawyers, I'll harrass her, until

she pays me every penny. And it will soon come to light, Mrs. Thomas, for I went to the Attorney, who tells me, I shall bring down the Dowager's gold by handfulls; so I need make no further secret of it, but will tell you from first to last how she has used me. God forgive me, for I have made but one repentance of it ever since.

"I don't know when it happened, but it seems Sir Francis, in one of his letters to Miss, made mention of a person of the name of Mellish, who was worth a mort of money, and was leaving Paris for England. He promised this child to send her by this lady some trinkets, and finery, and what not—by-the-bye, he said that she had sixty-thousand pounds, and was to have a title at the death of her aunt. The idea that all these great things were *comeatable*, made Lady Clanville ruminate and ruminate, till she set every engine to work, to see what art or cunning could contrive to effect it. She called me one day, when I found her in charming good sorts, which

to be sure was a wonder, and she said to me: "Allan," says she, "I have always had so extraordinary an opinion of you, that I am going to make a confidant of a servant, a thing I never did before in the whole course of my life."—And then she palavered a great deal about her regard for me, and her desire of seeing me comfortable when old age came on. "No servant of her's," she said, "that tried to oblige her, should come to want, when they could not work: if she placed a confidence in me, she was sure she should never repent it, for she really had quite a value for her faithful Allan, which she would hasten to prove by unburthening her heart without swearing me to secrecy!" So, I directly swore I *never* would divulge to *no* one the conversation we should have; for, since she spoke so pretty and condescending, I thought it behoved me to do so. She *did* thank me, to be sure, took hold of my hand, and without more ado, made me sit down beside her.

"I have reason to believe, my good Allan," said she, "that my brother, Sir Francis Banmore, has formed some attachment in this county, which I do not approve, and therefore, I never can manifest my affection for him so evidently, as by running the risk of offending him, when his advantage is the possible consequence of my endeavours. To break this sad and deplorable connexion, *underhand*, seems to me a task of little difficulty, when I am aided and assisted by so clever and managing a person as my good Allan. I must now lay open my plan: but, first, you must understand that there is at the Hotel where Sir Francis resides, a Lady with sixty thousand pounds in her possession, great expectations from an aunt, and a Barony besides. These advantages may be glorious assistants in our scheme. I do believe his attachment is to either Lady Ann, or Lady Charlotte Lorraine, whose fortune is a mere nothing in comparison of Miss Mellish's—but I am not certain of

this, which makes me leave the discovery to your sagacity. Now, Allan, I have to propose to you to go to Paris, under pretence of purchasing flowers, laces, and nonsenses, but, *in fact*, to discover by hook and by crook, who the fair-one actually is. I know you of old to be a great genius on such occasions; scruples, you know, are got over in love and in war—where there are letters, nothing more easy. Your doubts *once* determined about her identity, and you may convert all these articles of finery into *neceſſaries* for her approaching marriage with *somebody else*. You are acquainted with the private history of every family in the county, so that I am confident you will match the lady very *suitably*. Only be wary—be cautious—hear *much*, and talk *little*. You need not fear his coming home in a hurry, for he loves my cash too much to run the risk of offending me; so that I can detain him as long as I like. Miss Mellish is in the very house, and I can only say, Allan, that, if ever it should come to be

a match between her and my brother, you shall have five hundred pounds *down* on the very day, and a thousand more at my death, as a testimony of my great regard for you."

"I saw," continued Allan, "that my Lady was so intent upon the business, that I might make my own terms, and therefore, after twirling my apron-strings for a considerable time, I said: Yes, to be sure, My Lady, the reward *ought* to be great; for, if I did agree to it, I should run a thousand risks—for instance now, if I reported an untrue marriage, and the parties ever discovered me, I should be prosecuted for wilful defamation, and . . . . . My mistress interrupted me saying: "I would protect you, Allan—on my life I would." I saw that the bait took, by her answering me so eagerly. And even, My Lady, if I was not detected in *that*, yet, if ever the motives for my propagating the falsehood were discovered, I should be turned adrift, without character, or . . . . "But, Allan," said she, "you would not *want*

one; money procures respect; five hundred down, and a thousand at my death, will set you *above* the world!"—Why, to be sure, My Lady, as you say..... Up she got, and opened her bureau, and took out a fifty pound note, which quieted my *nays*, sure enough. I wanted her to give me a bond for the thousand pounds, but she said, she did not like *that*, though she called heaven to witness she should be as good as her word. However, I put on a face of fear, and begged she would let me have a couple of hours to ruminate upon it, before I gave my consent.

"Certainly," said she, "only promise me you will not consult with any one upon the subject. I forgot one thing, Allan; I will add the small house in Middlesex, which holds a vote into the bargain; you shall have that also."

"I swear, Mrs. Thomas, I could hardly conceal my joy. My dear Lady, said I, I will not hesitate any longer—your heart, I see, is set upon it, and I love my mistress too well to deny her any thing. I am

quite determined to undertake *all* you desire, good, bad, or indifferent.—

"Never did I see a creature more rejoiced than she was at these words. After settling upon twenty different plans, and afterwards changing them, she told me, She would provide me with money for the purchase of fripperies, (the only possible pretext for the journey) and I was to lose no time in getting ready. "It will aid our scheme," said my mistress, "to tell my brother that I have parted with you, and I will desire him to afford you protection, as you are so good a creature; because, if he knew you to be still *my* servant, it would appear singular that you should go and purchase fineries for some other person—we must be upon our guard." Every thing was agreed on, and I was to set forward in three days, for I had many things to *furbish-up.* Next post-day, as luck would have it, a letter came from Miss Mellish's aunt, to say that Sir Francis had had the misfortune to break his leg. To be sure, My Lady thought it the most

providential circumstance that could have happened, as it confined him to *one* apartment, which would enable me to bring about *humane* tea-drinkings, between the Mellishes and the sick man, *after my own way.* To be sure, we were not a little thankful. She said, She would write to her brother, and beg of him to let me have the nursing of him; for, now, I was to be *her* servant again—and so far, heaven be praised! all things went on swimingly.— —"

Oh! Lady Jane, do such vile wretches exist?— — Farewel.

JULIA ST. HELEN.

LETTER XXIX.

The same to the same.

"THE very next morning after these news," continued Allan, "I set off for Paris, and got on my way so well, that, in four days, I was ushered into the sick room, where I found Sir Francis Banmore very bad indeed. He made a thousand enquiries about his daughter and Lady Clanville, asked after Mrs. Groves, and the butler, and in short about every servant in the house; but *now* I recollect that he avoided asking after Miss Julia St. Helen, though at the time I did not heed it. He seemed to be on the fidgets about something, but I could not tell what.

"Many days passed without any thing particular happening to help the scheme I was about. Sir Francis continued in the same state of health, and I nursed him with

much care and attention. One day, he suddenly asked me, Whether his dear Fanny walked out much, and with whom? —Not now, Sir Francis, I believe. She used to walk a deal with Miss Julia; but, since she is so bad, Miss generally airs with My Lady.

" 'I saw, poor gentleman, that he was in great pain; he put his hands to his face, and large drops stood on his forehead, like peas. He did not utter another word for a good hour; at last, he said: 'I forget; what was it you said about Fanny?'— Why, Sir Francis, she used to walk constantly, while Miss Julia was able to go with her, but she is so bad, that My Lady never lets the child go with any one but herself—'What! is Miss Julia ill then?'— Yes, Sir Francis; *ill* in every way, I do believe. God knows my heart, Mrs. Thomas; at *that* time, I only meant that she was very ill in health, for 'twas my belief that she would die; he, it seems, did not know how I meant it."

"Oh! nurse," said I, "every thing now opens before me—on this fatal mistake the wretched woman laid the foundation of my ruin." "Too true, indeed," said nurse, and proceeded.

"'Never a word did Sir Francis speak till four in the morning, when he raved, absolutely raved about Miss JULIA ST. HELEN,—called her to him—then bade her get back to Mr. Ford—now exclaimed, in the most piteous manner, that she was dead, and he would instantly follow her. 'Adored girl!—inhuman sister!—by all that is sacred, Madam, I will marry her to-morrow—keep your detested gold—I'll have none of it—Oh! Julia! Julia! my only beloved, adored, and promised WIFE!'

"'This desirable information of the whole state of his heart, and even actual engagement, was more than my most sanguine wishes could have hoped to accomplish. Without any further trouble did I come at his fair-one's name, and that by mere accident. That very day, I wrote to Lady

Clanville, telling her that I had wormed it out of him, after a great deal of toil, and hoped she would think my services deserving of a good reward. I now tried the key of my tea-chest to his portfolio, which I opened, and read over the whole budget of letters he had received at different times from England, and found that my mistress mentioned that Mr. Ford was vastly taken with Fanny's governess—but this, I am almost certain, was said without any design whatever, as it happened soon after Sir Francis went abroad.

" 'The physician gave him a composing draught, and sure enough it quieted him; for, in the morning, he appeared quite stupified. I do declare, Mrs. Thomas, I really pitied him, and when I reflected on poor Miss Julia St. Helen, and thought of *her* sufferings on *his* account, my heart ached for her. Had I known how vilely Lady Clanville would have used me, as I *now* do, I would have offered my services to the poor thing, underhand, and have done as much for her, as I did for Miss

Mellish, without fee or reward; for, every one loved her—even Lady Clanville, who at first, hated her, grew very fond of her, at last. But, while I grieved for the unhappy pair, I would recollect the old maxim: "Every one for himself, and God for us all." So, I silenced these reflections, which only made me dull and melancholly.

"'I foresaw I must weaken this rooted passion, before I could ever introduce Miss Mellish's name to Sir Francis, with any probability of success. The next morning, he grew better and more composed, and began again about Fanny — asked, Whether she was much grown and improved in her person, and where she had been the day I came away.—'Nowhere, Sir Francis; she sat at home by herself; for, as My Lady was miserable on your account, there was no one to go with her now that Miss Julia St. Helen is gone away—'Gone away, Allan!'—'Yes, the Lord in heaven knows where, Sir; without saying *with* your leave, or *by* your leave,

she set off after breakfast, and was not returned at two the next day, when I came away.'

" ' Gracious God!' said he, ' this pain is too severe, too acute.' On my conscience, I believe he did not mean the pain in his leg, for he turned up his eyes so mournfully, as he spoke, that I could not help feeling for him, in spite of myself. Poor dear gentleman, his very voice now sounds in my ear!"

Imagine, my dear Lady Jane, what I suffered during this recital; but the *wish* to find that the man I *had* loved was still not unworthy of my good opinion operated so powerfully, that I bade nurse go on.

" Well, my dear young Lady, Mrs. Allan proceeded, and said: ' Sir Francis never spoke another word during the whole of that evening; but, as night approached, the light-headed fits came on. They were now so bad, and he raved so about Miss Julia St. Helen, that the doctors said, They had much to fear. Indeed I almost repented my having passed my word to Lady

Clanville, but I could not be so mean, you know, as to forfeit it on any account. What the doctors had said, however, frightened me very much, and I thought I would not talk again about Miss, until he was better able to bear it, but he renewed the discourse the next day. 'Did not you say,' he asked, 'Fanny's friend was gone on a visit?'—'What friend, Sir?' says I, as if I did not understand him; 'do you mean Miss Julia St. Helen, Sir Francis?'—'Yes; was she gone on a visit?'—'Only as usual, Sir; I believe for a few days; they are so excessive fond of her!'—'Who, they? who is so fond of her?'—'The Fords, Sir; Miss Ford can't live a day without her: pray God she don't make *his* heart ach—'tis my belief *he* repents already—more folks think so, as well as *me*, I'll be bound.' 'Don't talk, Allan,' said he; 'I am suffering tortures—O my God! do not try me too far!'

"'The doctors were obliged this evening to bring another of their profession, and they all said that the fever was so

obstinate, that he ought to be told of his danger, in case his affairs were not settled. I am sure I was within an ace of confessing to him all the lies I had told ever since my arrival; but I resolved to keep at a distance from the bed, as he had not strength enough to talk to me, if I remained at the window. Three days passed without his uttering one word, good, bad, or indifferent, to any creature, except when he was delirious, and then it was all: 'Base, perjured Julia!' to be sure, nothing else would come across him. Then came an interval of quiet again, when he bade me give him a pen, ink and paper, and a book to write on. I tried to dissuade him, but in vain; he would have it. Indeed, Mrs. Thomas, I ask your forgiveness, and God's forgiveness also, for all the wrongs I did to serve my vile ungrateful mistress, who now refuses to fulfil her agreement. As I was saying, he *would* write, and when he had finished, he directed it, to you, Mrs. Thomas. But here I *own* my fault—I *did* wrong—I opened the letter—there was

only two lines to you, but a whole page to Miss Julia, upbraiding her for her perjury, duplicity and falsehood—such a letter I never read. I burnt it. Sir Francis had given it to his French Valet to put into the post, but I soon wheedled him out of it, to serve my own purposes. I suppose he wrote a dozen letters one after another, all of which I contrived to serve in the same way—and I opened one from you, Mrs. Thomas, which told him of Miss Julia's broken-heart at his silence."

You will perhaps think me unjust, Lady Jane; but, in this moment, I felt angry at poor nurse for having done this without my knowledge. "I am sure," said I, "Sir Francis would have thought me privy to it." "Whatever he might have thought," she replied, "does not signify now; he was hindered by this vile Allan's baseness, from thinking at all, as he never got the letter. Indeed, my dear young Lady, I could not see Sir John Ellisborough's child dying by inches, without feeling a desire of saving her, and reproaching Sir Francis

for his cruelty in neglecting to write to you; for, *that* was what I blamed him for. I could scarcely contain my rage, when the abominable wretch confessed it to my face: but I wanted to hear the whole, and therefore, endeavoured to conceal my abhorrence of her conduct. She went on."

" 'Well, Mrs. Thomas, Sir Francis was all impatience for a letter from you, or Miss St. Helen. He grew so nervous with vexation and disappointment, that his head shook like an aspen-leaf. Nevertheless, though he was so worn away that he looked like a skeleton, yet he acquired a comparative degree of calmness, and, after a little time, made daily advances to recovery. *Now* was my time to plan and execute. I began with giving *his* compliments (unknown to him) to Mrs. and Miss Mellish, requesting their company at tea-time. The ladies put off every other engagement, to oblige him, as they thought. Then, I told Sir Francis That the ladies had sent *their* compliments, and would do themselves the pleasure of making tea for him

that evening.' He would be as cross and fractious as Old Nick at their intrusion, but he could not help himself. Another time, I would tell Miss Mellish in a sly manner, that Sir Francis was always better, when *she* was there—and to *him* I would say: 'Poor Miss Mellish! she does not keep her counsel well; when she heard you had passed such a bad night, I protest her poor eyes were full of tears.' In short, I made so many speeches backwards and forwards, that it is wonderful how they escaped detection. At length, my trouble was rewarded, for poor Miss Mellish began to look silly whenever Sir Francis spoke to her, which I never failed to remark to him, and this corroborated whatever I had advanced upon the subject.

"'But you must know, Mrs Thomas, that *he* was not equally tractable. He would constantly say in the morning: 'I hope to God I am not to be visited today;' but I was indefatigable. In two months time, he was more composed than I had reason to hope, from the excessive

shock he had experienced at first: all things considered, I met with sufficient encouragement to proceed; but I found it would require many *tight tugs* to pluck up the remaining affection for Miss St. Helen, before I could strike a bold stroke for Miss Mellish. I was certain that Lady Clanville would never answer any enquiry about Miss Julia, even had Sir Francis written about her, and she was too watchful, to suffer a letter from Miss Fanny to come without reading it first. But, as I said, I must *undermine* his passion. The strongest and best fortified intrenchments will yield to the *sap*, though they may resist a *siege*.

"'To bring all I had undertaken to a final issue appeared not only possible, but even probable. I sent to the milliner, desiring her to send me a variety of gauzes, feathers, flowers and lace, that I might choose what I wanted, *as I could not get out*. Having picked out enough for my purpose; I began packing them up, and contrived to stand in a place where he must observe me. My plan succeeded

charmingly, for I put them into the box, then out again twenty times, till at last he said: "What taudry feathers you have got there! Whom are they for?"—"I bought them to send to England, Sir Francis."—"They are far from pretty; whom are they for?"—"For a person who is going to be married; though in my opinion, feathers are not fit for a parson's wife."—"But who is the person you send them to?"—"I am bound not to tell on *any* account, Sir Francis."—"Oh! with all my heart; the person may keep the secret."—"I don't know why it should be one, neither; but every body has got his whims on these occasions."—"I do assure you, Allan, I have not the least curiosity—I asked without thinking."—"Droll enough, Sir, that *you*, of all people in the world, should ask.—"Why so?"—"Because you are the *very* person I was *forbid* to tell."—"But I tell you I don't wish to know any thing about it—there—shut the curtain."

"'Was it not enough, Mrs. Thomas, I ask you, to provoke a saint to find him so

indifferent? "No, Sir," said I, "why should you? Miss St. Helen is so foolishly earnest in having it private . . . . ."

"'Private!" said he; 'what should be private, ha?'

—"'Lord have mercy upon my blabbing tongue! Well, to be sure, murder will out, as the saying is. They are for *her* wedding, Sir.'

"'Heaven and hell!' he exclaimed (an expression I never heard him use before) 'She shall *not* touch them. Burn them, this instant; burn them.'

—"'Lord! Sir Francis . . . .'

—"'I say burn them—this very instant; burn them.'

—"'Why, Sir Francis, I have paid . . .'

—"'Destroy them, woman; or by the God that made me, I'll quit my bed to tear them to atoms.'

"'His under-jaw shook with rage—I began to burn them; but making a half stop, his passion grew so violent, that he tore his night-cap to pieces, and flung it at my head. "Woman, be quick, or by

my soul I'll come . . . . . " I was terrified to death, and ran to the bell, for I saw him sink down in the bed in very strong convulsions, which ended in the most frightful laughing hysterics I ever beheld. The doctors were sent for, who thought he was going off, as they had left him so charmingly in the morning—and indeed I thought no other. God knows, if he had died, I should have reflected upon myself for being his murderer.' "

Allow me, dear Lady Jane, to withdraw my eyes from this complicated scene of iniquity—I am parched up with fever at the narration—Yet I must bear it—If this unfortunate existence is still to be prolonged, it will derive a state of composure from the certainty of *his* innocence. Nurse is the good Samaritan that pours oil into my wounds. A little while, I trust, will enable me to bear with fortitude the corrosive smart of disappointed love. The knowledge of *his* happiness must assuage my sufferings—must make me *not* absolutely miserable. Yet, can I be otherwise,

while he believes me culpable?—Oh! impossible—but I will submit to this, sooner than clear myself, lest it involve his innocent wife in our misfortunes . . . . . *Our*, did I say? "Mine is a fee grief, due to my single breast." God of heaven! Shower down every blessing upom *him* and *his*, and to the store of happiness he merits, add the sum *I have lost.* Oh! Lady Jane, my dearest friend, I am sick—quite sick of life.

I dare not read over the above, which was written this morning—I have this instant received your letter, and hasten to assure you that I no longer refuse a request so delicately urged. But I should feel unworthy of Lady Charlotte's friendly attentions to me, did I not also place her name, unsolicited, with the Dutchess of Byrom's. They make me vain, by giving me such testimonies of their good opinion, which is made still more pleasing to me, conveyed through such a channel.

How blended are the joys and sorrows of this world! I have just weaned myself

from a subject of exquisite pain, and am engrossed by one of extreme pleasure—the rejoining my beloved friend. Heaven has sent *you* to me, my amiable *mistress*, and sister of my heart, as an attonement for every evil, as a recompence for all my trials. I already feel the luxury of meeting. Fortunately, the rector's sister wishes to lodge with my goody, who has, by the help of my *old* gowns and *young* fingers, fitted up a very neat room for her reception. We have, by our joint industry, put the garden into the nicest order imaginable. This occupation diverts my mind more effectually than any other. I inclose a purse of my own handy work, for the General, which I hope you will not only *allow*, but even *command* him to wear. Within that purse, the General will discover a pair of elbow ruffles, which he is requested to present to the most amiable woman of his acquaintance, and also inform her that they are worked by a friend, who never can sufficiently express the sincere esteem, regard and obligation, which she unitedly

feels for the bride and bridegroom. Addio, Addio!

JULIA ST. HELEN.

LETTER XXX.

The same to the same.

I BEGIN my sad employment early this morning, as I am extremely impatient to come to the end of my narrative, when it shall become part of my religion to banish all painful retrospect from my mind. None of these afflictions could have befallen me, without God's permission, and this conviction will lead me to submit without murmur.

Upon Sir Francis's recovery from this refined stroke of art, his spirits were so exhausted, that he lay almost lifeless for five days. The physicians gave him the strongest cordials; but they made little alteration,

and he was almost stone-cold, in spite of a large fire and three bed blankets; and though, for three weeks previous to this "Experiment upon the Passions" he had sat up from two to five hours every day, it was now impossible to prevail upon him to move. "Indeed, Mrs. Thomas," said Allan, "I was more terrified than I can express. Mrs. and Miss Mellish would constantly come in, but he would lie with his eyes open and never heed them: I protest I thought I had overdone my work, for I feared he was struck with melancholy. This stupefaction continued so long, that I mentioned my apprehensions to Miss Mellish, in a low voice, at the window of his apartment, when she instantly clasped her hands together and exclaimed: 'Gracious heaven avert it!' so loud, that, to my utter astonishment, he undrew the curtain, and half sat up in bed. She, poor soul! construed this sudden amendment in him to the kind interposition of Providence in her favor, and she could hardly conceal the grateful sensations she

felt for the kindness. Her aunt saw it was something of a tender nature that had overpowered her, and instantly led her out of the room; but I snatched the good interval, to talk to Sir Francis, who asked me: 'Is Miss Mellish unwell?' This question was music to my ears, you may well suppose. 'Yes, Sir,' I answered; 'poor Miss Mellish is very compassionate in her disposition. She almost faints when she hears you cry out. I wish to God her aunt would remove her, for I do believe she is very unhappy!'

"'And if she is unhappy,' said he, 'God knows how much I pity her—perhaps she has met with a disappointment that imbitters her days.'

"'No, Sir, I don't think that; for she was as blithe as a lark when I first came. From my observation, I believe it to be an affection for a person that don't return it, but *you* know better, Sir Francis, than *I* can—Poor thing! was I her aunt, I'd remove her to-morrow; for being under the very roof does but nourish her unfortunate

attachment.' He was silent, but I did not chuse to quit the subject so soon, so I added: 'I saw how it would be, from the first; I do believe, Sir Francis, she loved you, as soon as she saw you.'

"'Heaven forbid!' said he. 'Allan, I do not like to hear such impertinent suppositions—there is not the smallest foundation for your absurd suggestions; I insist upon your silence for the future.' It struck me, however, that a wise general would push the matter further in so favorable a moment; so, away I posted to invite the ladies, in *his* name, to tea that evening. They both excused themselves: but this did not suit my taste; so, I went a second time, with Sir Francis's regrets that they were engaged to tea, and requesting them to take coffee in his apartment, immediately after dinner, as he should particularly enjoy their company, being rather better. Mrs. Mellish came; the niece staid in her own apartment. I left the sick chamber, during this visit, and stepped to Miss Mellish, who gave me a glass of wine, and

made much of Sir Francis's little dog, while I cried up its master to the skies. 'She did not know that he had lost his wife,' she said; but this was all *sham*, and she told the lie so very ill, that a child might have found her out. She did not seem fond of enquiring after him, though she attentively listened to every thing I said about him. I contrived to insinuate that Sir Francis thought her the most handsome and agreeable woman he had ever met with. This pleased her, for she blushed up to the eyes.

"'Sir Francis's leg got now so well, that he daily took an airing; but, as his carriage was inconvenient for a second person to sit in, as he was obliged to lay his leg on the seat, Mrs. Mellish insisted on his using her coach. He occupied one side, and generally both ladies the other. I was transported at this lucky contrivance, and doubted not that time would confirm an attachment on *her* part, and create one on *his*.'"

Her disposition was the counterpart of

that of Sir Francis—she was the very soul of sensibility, from what I can gather from nurse, betraying joy or grief in so ardent a manner, upon his getting better or worse, that Sir Francis, with all his coldness, could not remain ignorant of it. At every interview, she became more attached to a man so formed to captivate the senses. With *his* danger, *her* love—with *his* recovery, *her* hope encreased; these two sentiments alternately divided every moment of her existence, and indeed, Lady Jane, to know and to love him, are the same thing; his head and heart alike do honor to human nature.

" ' Her aunt, who was first detained by the hope of seeing her sister, the Baroness, and latterly, out of humanity to her contryman, Sir Francis, who, she believed, would never recover, saw this growing attachment with the greatest concern, as she was thoroughly convinced Sir Francis had a prior affection for the *cruel, barbarous Julia* he so incessantly called for in his delirium. I had an ear for every key-hole in

the house, and applied it where ever I thought any thing was going forward. Seeing Miss Mellish in tears, one morning, I determined to find out for *what*, before night. Her aunt had been taking the usual airing with the sick man; therefore, at the return of the carriage, I watched her going back to her own apartment, listened, and heard all.

" 'Well, my dear niece, I told Sir Francis Banmore that on Tuesday we set out for England; but I cannot say he seemed either grieved or surprised at it.'

" 'Good God! Madam, why should he? What can our absence be to him? But you mean Tuesday sen'night, aunt, not next Tuesday?'

" 'Yes, *next* Tuesday, niece. Let me, my dear, save you the trouble of a confession or a denial. I will own to you, that Sir Francis is every thing a woman can desire in a husband, and I do not wonder, though I have seen with concern your consciousness of his merits, that a prior attach-

ment makes him behold you without a similar impression.'

"'Good God! aunt, how you astonish me! What a strange opinion! Indeed, I did not expect such ridiculous ideas to be brought forward to mortify me. You must pardon me, Madam; but it is unkind of you; I did not expect, nor do I merit such treatment.'

"'Her aunt endeavoured to soothe her, and assured her the affection she felt for her niece had led her into error; 'if it was not so . . . . . .' Miss Mellish burst into tears.

—"'I beg your pardon, my love, for having been too precipitate. I am rejoiced to find myself mistaken on this head. Now, without any reluctance whatever, I shall on Tuesday set forward for England, on *this* I am determined.' The poor girl, who had evaded the acknowledgement of her regard for him, exclaimed: 'O, my good Madam! only *one* week more'—'For what purpose, my dear?'—'Only to . . . .

not to go. O! aunt, can you, *would* you leave him?'

—" 'Yes, certainly, my dear, when I see your happiness will become the forfeit if I stay longer. There is *now*, with regret I see it, no time to be lost. Exert yourself, my dear girl; I am certain Sir Francis has an engagement; an immediate retreat is what you owe to yourself. Resolve *not* to take leave; I will make proper excuses for you—and let us both endeavour to forget a circumstance that would be attended with pain in the remembrance.'

—" 'Alas, aunt, should your ideas of his prepossession in favor of some happier woman be unfounded—should he be at liberty, what must become of me?'

—" 'If Sir Francis Banmore is sensible of your merits, my love, absence will not lessen that sentiment—he can follow you, if he pleases. He is now able to set off, if he has the smallest inclination. No, my girl, you must be yourself—be firm, and subdue a passion, which, though hopeless, is not ill-founded; it is the unworthiness of

the object that constitutes the shame. He certainly is a most amiable man, and calculated to make an impression on a woman of delicacy and sensibility. I am not surprised at your partiality, though I lament it. Trust me, my dear, there is an insurmountable obstacle, for he called on some woman during the whole time of his delirium.'

—" ' Only *one* week longer, dear aunt.'

—" ' To relieve you from the false hope of my being won over, I repeat that I will *not*. You know my motive, my dear niece.'

" ' There was, Mrs. Thomas, full two hours *pro* and *con* to the very same purpose, but the aunt was positive, and the niece put an end to her importunities. In the evening, she had a very bad headach, and Mrs. Mellish thinking she would get better if left to herself, came and made tea for Sir Francis. I was present when she asked him, Whether he had letters, or any commissions that she could take to England, as on the Tuesday, she and her niece were to leave Paris. ' Yes,' said he,

'I shall gladly embrace the opportunity of sending some presents to my little girl; Miss Mellish promised to deliver them herself!' He said a great deal about the loss he should sustain in their society when they left Paris. For himself, he had no desire to quit it—'No more have I,' said she; 'indeed I like Paris, and the acquaintance I have been fortunate enough to make here, so extremely well, that I should certainly continue, were it not necessary to present Miss Mellish at Court. She had an intention of going through the ceremony last winter, but your long confinement in a strange country, induced us to delay our return, as illness of itself is sufficiently disagreeable, without being alone in it; therefore, my niece made the proposal that we should continue here, to which I very willingly consented. She is of so domestic a disposition, that she would gladly avoid it; but sixty thousand pounds in her own possession, and a Barony, with large expectations, are my reasons for not indulging her.'

" ' I had no pretence, Mrs. Thomas, for staying in the room, so I went out—and listened as usual.

" ' Fortune and title,' said he, ' are almost superfluous appendages to such merit; but you certainly do right in introducing her. There is something uncommonly interesting about her—an air of softness and sensibility which pleases me in woman.'

" ' Upon my word, Sir Francis, I thought you too much of a philosopher to be sensible she had any merit at all. I never beheld a person so little taken with her beauty as yourself. I do assure you it was quite the rage to follow her when we left England—indeed she might have married in the first rank, both there and in Italy; but she protests against marriage, until she meets with a man calculated to make her a pleasing companion—a well-informed understanding, and an obliging disposition are what she seeks for in a gentleman—his being with or without fortune is not an object of enquiry.'

—" ' I sincerely hope Miss Mellish will

meet the reward due to such sentiments—she deserves to be happy. How many are there who imagine the having *one* hundred thousand pounds gives them a right to match with a *second!* These sordid, mercenary beings are incapable of intellectual enjoyment. It is so extraordinary a sentiment in these dissipated times, that I am quite charmed with it—it exactly coincides with my own feelings.'

—"' I often tell my niece that she should be acquainted with the amiable lady, whose name you never mentioned, Sir Francis—the friend of your little girl (Sir Francis colored)—Bless me, do not you recollect that you told us a charming trait of her character: When the gentleman she was engaged to, displayed all the family jewels before her, he prettily said, "That they could not add to her charms." "How fortunate," she replied, "that we are both of the same opinion, because *now* you will allow me to make them over to your sweet girl there, who will show them to better advantage; do this, my dear Sir;

the *only* jewel of value with *me* is your *heart*, and I can set store by no other."—Sure, Sir Francis, you have not forgot the circumstance?'

"'Every particular is *now* fresh in my memory,' said he as he rang for tea.

—"'My niece possesses similar sentiments—they are born with us—but I protest I do not think they are to be taught.'

—"'A great deal may be done by education. For instance, were there ever such an unnatural production as an infant miser, education might lead him to be generous.'

—"'No, no, Sir Francis; not to be *stingy*, perhaps; but education, take my word for it, will never make him liberal, generous, bounteous.'

—"'Agreed—'Tis a man's own fault, if he is otherwise than happy with a woman of Miss Mellish's merits. You may think me severe, but a cultivated understanding does not *always* attend a great fortune; the *principal* charm is sure to pur-

chase admiration, and the *mind* becomes a quite secondary consideration.'

—" ' Indeed, Sir Francis, we have but to look at our annual list of divorces, to prove the truth of your remark. Notwithstanding my niece's deserts, I often tremble for her—there are so many chances. . . . .'

—" ' *Hers* must be a fortunate one; engaging and amiable as she is, you cannot doubt the felicity of her fate!'

—" ' Upon my word, Sir, I shall retract my former opinion; I was unjust, I find, in my censure, when I said, that you were insensible to female charms.'

—" ' Indeed, Madam, no man is less so. I should be much happier, were I less *vulnerable* to attractions.'

—" ' How! is that possible? Surely, Sir Francis Banmore stands in less danger of a repulse from our sex than almost *any* man I ever met with. This is *sans compliment*—at my time of life, you know, I may be allowed to speak plain truth to a gentleman.'

—" 'And yet, Madam, the very man, whom you so obligingly flatter, is the victim of an unreturned passion—Forgive me, I am very impertinent--you have led me too far.'

—" 'I do assure you, Sir, the *honor* of your confidence is not thrown away upon me; believe me, it is as sacred as in your own breast.'

—" 'My dear Lady, I have been the dupe of appearances. I fondly believed our love was reciprocal—living under the same roof with the woman I adored—having every opportunity of seeing her heart, *undisguised*, as I thought, and trusting that her attachment was as sincere as mine, I loved her —placed every hope of future happiness in the extatic idea of calling her mine—but my passion rendered me blind. She now robs me of even the shadow of hope, and leaves me to eternal despair. Oh, Madam! she flies the very house where my ill-starred passion commenced—seizes the very time of my confinement too, for her

barbarity, and places herself beyond my power. She has wilfully robbed me of peace of mind for ever—She studied to attract my heart by every charm of mind and form united, and having done so, leaves me to lament the delusion.'

—" 'You perfectly amaze me, Sir Francis. It would distress me indeed, if I beheld your passion in the same hopeless light. I fear I show more regard for you than the lady would approve of, when I inform you that my niece returns your regard.'

—" 'Heavens! Madam, Miss Mellish . . . . !'

—" 'Returns your affection, Sir Francis —loves you most tenderly—as much as you love her. My niece, Sir Francis, has *long* been sensible of your worth.'

—" 'For mercy's sake, Madam, recal that fatal sentence, and let us both for ever forget this unfortunate conversation.'

—" 'One would imagine that you preferred misery to happiness, by your obstinate adherence to despair. Believe me,

Sir Francis, the dear girl, by a voluntary effort of reason, was tearing herself away from that *very* roof, where her affections had been engaged. I complied with her wish, because I saw her wretched. Nothing less than your own confession could have persuaded me that she was dear to you.'

—"'Fatal, fatal error!'

—"'Indeed, Sir Francis, it has been so. *You* have suffered much anxiety, and my niece, from the same ignorance, has to lament impaired health and broken spirits; but, thank God! better prospects arise. I ardently hope, my dear friend, that you will be as happy as a perfect union of hearts can make you.'

—"'You have surprised me, Madam—this unlooked-for stroke I want words to reply to.'

—"'Great joy, I perceive, is as overpowering, as excessive grief; while I share only in the pleasing transports I have occasioned you, almost by accident.'

"'Well, Mrs. Thomas, to be sure I

could have listened till doomsday to this conversation; but a vile cramp in my foot obliged me to quit my post. Mrs. Mellish continued above an hour after this; but, as Miss Mellish had set open the opposite door for air, I could not for the life of me indulge in another listen. When I thought his valet had carried in his night-clothes, I followed, as usual, with the rice-gruel; but what was his man's surprise, and my vexation, at seeing him cry like any woman. I never witnessed so touching a sight in all my life—indeed it was extremely affecting.

"'Lord, Sir,' cried I, 'pray, pardon my boldness—no bad news from Miss Banmore, I hope?'

—"'Oh! none, none; leave me, Mrs. Allan—leave me—I will ring'—

"'I did as I was ordered; but, peeping through the key-hole, sure enough, I saw him wring his hands, and then clasp them, and turn up his poor swelled eyes, which shed a torrent of tears; then he cried out: 'O my God! Barbarous, inhuman Julia! Unfortunate me!' You see, Mrs. Thomas,

how the thought of marrying any other but Miss St. Helen went against him. Poor Gentleman! I am sure, my heart ached for his troubles.

" 'The next day, he got up very early, for he never closed his eyes during the night. When I entered the room, I protest I was quite shocked to see him. Miss Mellish's maid told me her mistress was very ill indeed, and was leaving Paris that morning, because she thought change of air would do her good. I repeated this to Sir Francis, who seemed quite surprised at the news. He sent me to enquire, in his name, after both the ladies—the answer was, 'Miss Mellish had caught the fever which was raging about Paris, but nevertheless, was setting out for Madame de Montmorenci's château—they joined in compliments and good wishes to Sir Francis.' When I returned with this message, he seemed greatly perplexed—wrote a note, and then tore it—At last, he sent his compliments, and, if agreeable, he would do himself the honor of waiting upon them

for a few minutes. Just as I was gone, he cried: 'Stop, Allan, don't be in such a hurry'—After musing a minute, he bade me go and deliver it. I was so afraid that he should again repent, that I set off instantly—and, to be sure, Miss Mellish changed color, and was in so wonderous a twitter, that she looked for all the world like a corpse.

" 'As his hand was engaged with his crutch, I opened the two doors for him. Miss Mellish had absented herself, so that the aunt had the field to herself—but a *deuced* servant was busy about cleaning the lamp in the passage, so that my ears did me no service. However, I dawdled about till the door opened for the servant to carry in chocolate, and saw both ladies seated on the sopha, and Sir Francis engaged in very earnest conversation with them. To be sure, I was quite on the fidgets to know what they were talking about; but, for the soul of me, I could not catch a single word to satisfy my curiosity. Here he remained full two hours, and then returned to dress,

as he intended dining with Mrs. Mellish—the man told me that the ladies had changed their minds, and did not leave Paris that day.

"'In the evening, Miss Mellish's fever encreased, and the doctors forbad her being moved. For many days, it was a doubt whether she would recover. Sir Francis was backwards and forwards, from morning to night, and 'tis my belief he was in hopes the fever was catching, for never did mortal appear so tired of his life. On the eighth day, the disorder took a favorable turn, and notwithstanding my vigilance to find out what was going on, the aunt and Sir Francis had brought matters to a conclusion, without my even suspecting any thing of it. On the Tuesday, the ambassador's chaplain visited Sir Francis at a very early hour, and after staying about ten minutes, went into Mrs. Mellish's apartment, who seemed in a sort of bustle, though quite airy and pleased at something. In a little while, my master followed, looking more like a ghost than a

living creature. At twelve, I was called into the room, and Mrs. Mellish said: 'Mrs. Allan, wish joy to Sir Francis and Lady Banmore!

"'I protest I was thunderstruck—but never was a creature more rejoiced: I already handled my thousand pounds in thought—it seemed too good to be true, and I almost doubted my ears, to think it should have been so secret! Well, we all left Paris, in two hours time, bag and baggage, and to be sure, I was the happiest of the whole cargo, thinking all the way how Lady Clanville would reward me. Alas! Mrs. Thomas, would you believe it? She let me be in the house three whole weeks, without giving me so much as the value of a cast-off gown. This, you may be certain, *set up my back*, and so, I asked her to put me in possession of the small house, which she threw into the scale, of her own accord, before I undertook the journey. But she answered me very short, and protested, 'She never had an idea of giving it me, till after her death.' I mut-

tered something, which put her into a great passion, and she said: 'That if I made any stir about it, she certainly would strike the thousand pounds legacy out of her will'—and I do believe she will be as good as her word, for she sticks at nothing. I wish to heaven I had never meddled in the business, but I *can* compel her to do me justice, and I *will*.'

"But take my word for it, Miss St. Helen, these two vile women are too wise to quarrel, for they are afraid of each other's reports. You will scarcely believe me, when I tell you, that, the very next day after Allan had related to me the whole of their joint wickedness, Lady Clanville came herself to see this bad woman, and after being closeted with her upwards of two hours in my little parlour, they came into the kitchen as good friends as ever. Lady Clanville took notice of every thing she saw, and asked Whether I would let her take a second breakfast, as she longed to eat some of my wholesome brown bread. I gave her the best of every thing I had,

and, to be sure, she did very handsome by me for my trouble. Allan drank tea with her mistress and went back in the carriage—I was rejoiced at so good a riddance. The artful creature said to me in a half whisper, as she was leaving the house: 'Lord! Mrs. Thomas, what a deal of romance I have been telling you!' Neither one nor t'other mentioned your dear name, Miss Julia—they had done you too much injury, vile creatures.

"On the third day after your absence, my poor head and eyes were very bad indeed, and for many days, I could not bear the light; for all I could do, tears would force their way, which gave me excessive pain. In the evening, Sir Francis and his lady arrived. I knew my duty to my benefactor, and therefore, got the gardener to carry a respectful message, wishing him prosperity, and enquiring how his honor did after his journey—my heart was too proud to ask after his lady, well knowing who *ought* to have been his wife. As I grew better, I used

to darken the window, and take off my bandage; the day after, I did so, and who should come to my poor cottage, but Sir Francis! He seemed indeed very much altered, and still made use of a crutch. I could not refrain from tears, though I struggled much to appear composed. After some kind questions about my health, he asked Whether any interest of his could procure me my former cottage again of the Kentish rector, and assured me I should not be at any expence of the removal of my things. 'Your being here,' said he, 'reminds me of old times, nurse.' 'Yes, Sir,' says I 'my being here is not *now* desirable, for it reminds *me* of old times *too*.' I thought he was to blame, my dear Lady, and could not answer him otherwise. When he passed the threshold, he turned back and said: 'Do you know any thing of her?' 'No, Sir,' I replied; 'she left the *only true* friend she had in the world ignorant of her situation'. 'Poor, infatuated girl!' sighed he, and walked away, before I had time to make a reply. Mr. Ford has

called upon him twice, but Sir Francis was denied both times, and he is so offended, that he protests he will not call again, till Sir Francis makes an apology.

"The next day, he wrote to the rector in Kent, and the worthy man lost no time in assuring Sir Francis that I should have my old habitation, and welcome, as long as I lived—and you cannot think how nice and comfortable these good friends have made me; for, Sir Francis paid all expences, as promised, and gave me twenty guineas when I left his neighbourhood; this, I am sure, I did not expect, as I had in a manner let him see I did not approve his conduct in regard to you. As I said, the cottage is mine for life, and now, my dear Miss Julia, my beloved young Lady, look upon that as *your home*, and me as your servant, as long as I am able to serve you."

I expressed my obligation for this new proof of her friendship, and told her how comfortably I was situated with you, without distressing the good creature by

relating the manner in which my dear Lady Jane discovered my misery. This benevolent, kind-hearted woman staid at Kensington, very near Mrs. Boringdon's, for full three weeks, when I found myself so much amended from the pleasure I enjoyed in the society of a person I so tenderly regarded, that I had no further occasion for country air. Nurse returned to the peaceful abode from which I now write—to me it has always been a most hospitable one. In all my distresses, this worthy creature has volunteered her protection, when she knew where to address me. My gratitude is as unbounded as the obligation she has conferred upon me on every occasion, and I do from my heart feel a filial regard for this valuable being.

It is now upwards of two years since my return to Grosvenor-square, when I had the satisfaction of finding myself an object of interest with my dearest *mistress*, and also with Lady Charlotte and Mr. Egremont. Elated with the confidence you reposed in one who had entered your ser-

vice under so many disadvantages, I regained my health, and could I but have forgotten the past, I must have been happy, notwithstanding my fall from affluence to servitude. How often, when the whole house has been hushed in sleep, have I adjourned into the little inner drawing-room, to touch the harp, when, though I had determined to avoid every air that could remind me of the past, yet some particular note would vibrate on my ear, and dissolve me into tears. I thought this so ungrateful, that I formed the resolution to forego this enchanting amusement for others less dangerous to my health and peace. Confiding in HIM, with whom futurity is present, I determined to forbear all retrospective regret, and do my duty with encreasing ardor, in whatever situation I might henceforth be placed. Satisfied with myself at this voluntary effort, I regained a calmness to which my soul had long been a stranger, and this changed into happiness, when I found that I had it in my power to preserve the peace and reputation of a fami-

ly I loved, *unknown to them.* The mental transport I experienced in this grateful reflection, remained undiminished amidst all my trials. I had long perceived in Lady Charlotte's woman an insincerity of disposition, and jealousy of me on many occasions; but I really believed the library-scene had been discovered through mere accident, till your sister's account of the transaction convinced me of the contrary. Three years and a half have now elapsed since Sir Francis Banmore made Miss Melish his wife. I derive peculiar satisfaction from nurse's assurance that she seems perfectly happy. They have one child, who, I hope and trust, will complete their felicity. Judging from appearances, he believes me the unworthiest of women, and I ardently pray he may *ever* think me so, if the discovery of my innocence and injuries would make him less happy. My lot has indeed been severe, but God forbid I should attempt to justify myself, as it might affect *his* peace as well as his wife's. I hope she will be solicitous to please him,

and that she will succeed in her endeavours. May God bless them both, and enable me some time or other to prove my friendship for the father by some *undetected* act of friendship to Lady Banmore's child. The bare idea is luxury. Indeed, my friend, the disappointment of my hopes in this tender point has left an aching void in my heart, which not all the splendor in the world could ever supply. I drag about a weary load of life, which I long to lay down. A prey to ill health, and subject to corroding thought, I tremble at meeting the very man whom my soul acknowledges as the most amiable of his sex. I determine *ever* to avoid him, and yet life would be supportable only in his presence. My heart acquits me of every impropriety in this acknowledgement. It is now exalted friendship—no other sentiment do I feel for him. I could love his wife as my sister, because she constitutes part of his felicity.

I know my fault,
But such a potent head-strong fault it is,
That it but mocks reproof.

Rejoice with me, my dear friend, that I am come to the conclusion of my history, which has in its bare retrospect cost me nearly the same pangs again; but now, after all my toils and struggles with the world, I have more tranquil prospects in view. I already feel the calm which friendship alone can create. My more than sister —my guide, guardian, parent, friend, my all in this world—judge of my gratitude by my inability to express it.

Had I been so unfeeling as to address myself to that heart, whose extreme susceptibility makes it become an *actual* sufferer in the misfortunes of others, a relation of my own sorrows would have formed too pathetic a story for the ear of my friend; but so exquisitely refined are the emotions of pity and compassion in your benevolent heart, that I have studied to suppress those feelings in *yours*, which interest might have led me to awaken in *any other* bosom.

How could I launch into the praise of friendship?
Friendship, that best support of wretched man,
That gives us, when our life grows painful to us,
A sweet existence in a *second* being.

Nurse is gone to the rector's, to see whether the General's horses can be accommodated one night there, as otherwise, I shall be very much grieved at their coming so far for me; but I am aware I may as well preach to the winds as to either of you, when it is to spare *yourselves* trouble, or *me* obligation. In five and forty hours I shall embrace my amiable Lady Jane; how long the intermediate time will appear, you cannot be a judge, because *I* have not been the means of raising *you* from distress to competence. As the General insists upon being always included in my best love, I leave it to your prudence to convey a proper portion of it, reserving a superior share to yourself, and if he again should grumble, or appear dissatisfied, tell him your *servant ordered* her *mistress* to make this unequal division.

Mary Thomas is returned and brings good tidings—the rector will oblige me with pleasure—Pray, give my affectionate love to Lady Charlotte and my *master*, and kiss their dear little one for me. Adieu,

my dearest Lady Jane, and enjoy if you *can*, the same degree of satisfaction I feel at the prospect of meeting again. Ever, ever, my dear friend, your obliged

JULIA ST. HELEN.

LETTER XXXI.

Julia St. Helen to Mary Thomas.

I SIT down, my ever dear nurse, on the very night of my arrival, to quiet your apprehensions about me. I never had so pleasant a journey, notwithstanding the thoughts of leaving you constantly damped my spirits, in spite of the good prospect I had in view. When I arrived at the last stage, I was told the General had sent a pair of horses for me, which I ordered to be instantly put to, in the mean time,

bidding the man show me into a room. Imagine my joy, when I beheld both my estimable friends hastening towards me! As it was unexpected, it was almost too much for me, but a few minutes set all things again as they should be. General Harrington had come over in the morning, with Lady Jane, in his phaeton; that the horses might have time to recover their fatigue, we all dined at the inn, and afterwards came to town in the chaise. Nothing can be more cordial than Lady Charlotte's reception of me. You know I have told you that she is not quite so amiable as her sister; but I must do her the justice to say, Lady Jane could not have behaved more handsomely. She instantly brought down her charming boy, and placed him in my arms. She assured me, That, if ever she was blessed with a little girl, she would call her after her dear friend, Julia, whose kindness to her and family was such, as to have a lasting claim on her gratitude. She cried when she touched upon her treatment of me, and said She should ever reproach her-

self with having been too precipitate in her condemnation. I endeavoured to interrupt her, while she said *these* and many other obliging things. Indeed, her candid acknowledgement would have given me great pain, had I not perceived how much it elevated her in her husband's opinion. He rose from his seat, and taking her hand and mine at the same time, said: "My dearest life has the advantage of me—she *can* express her obligations to Julia St. Helen—*mine* are inexpressible. You, my amiable friend, preserved me from ruin—your assisting me with your little *all*, in the hour of pressure, gave me time to arrange my affairs, while your pointed admonitions awakened a just sense of the impropriety of my conduct; but alas! I yielded to temptation, though, at the moment of committing a new act of folly, I reprobated it. Your serious and solemn address, on the following day, when you threatened to fly the house, if *ever* my crime was repeated, made such a forcible impression upon me, that I formed a resolution never to merit your reproach again.

To describe what I felt at being bound by so sacred a promise as you had exacted, not to divulge, till I had your permission, the confidence you had reposed in me, in disclosing your family and name, and to keep secret the assistance you had offered me, is totally impossible; but it may be conceived, in a manner, by the dangerous illness it occasioned. My word of honor was engaged, and I preserved it inviolate. The torment I endured at *knowing* how unjustly you were treated, condemned and branded with infamy, got the better of my intellects, so that, when your letter arrived, giving me permission to tell *any truth* that could restore harmony to the family, it was useless, as I was delirious, and continued so for some time, before I could explain the mystery."

The General's re-entrance gave me an opportunity of changing a subject which affected us all. *Both* sisters assured me they should ever love, and consider me as a *third*. Lady Charlotte told me that the purple-bed-room was *my* property for life,

and the oftener I slept in it, the more I should oblige her and Mr. Egremont.

To-morrow week is the wedding; a delay in the parchments has occasioned this alteration. As soon as the ceremony is over, we set off for Suffex, whence I shall again write, as I know what real pleasure it is to you to hear from me; and, believe me, nurse, this heart can never feel indifferent upon that subject; the child of your beloved Sir John Ellisborough feels all that obligation for *you* that you avow for him. With what transport must that dear departed, if conscious of earthly transactions, behold your disinterested love of his unhappy, deserted, and destitute orphan, while my sainted mother, of whom my helpless infancy was robbed, will join him in admiration of your exalted worth. The reward, my benevolent friend, awaits you in this world, till a more certain one hereafter repays you far beyond what we at present can have any idea of.

I hope you have been to the closet, where the elder-flower-water stands. The letter I

have left there for my dear Mary Thomas will tell her more than I have leisure to do at present. Do not imagine that what it contains is an acquittal of any part of my immense debt: 'tis only the earnest of what I hope to do soon, as I shall hasten to prove more substantially than by words, how truly I am, dear nurse,

Your ever obliged Friend,

JULIA ST. HELEN.

LETTER XXXII.

Julia St. Helen to Lady Charlotte Egremont.

ACCORDING to my promise, I seize the first moment of leisure, to write to my dear Lady Charlotte, and assure her that we got safe and well, last night, to this delightful mansion. My colleague in office

and I were obliged to quit the coach, as one of the wheels made such a vile squeaking, that it set our teeth on edge, which gave Mr. Talbot an opportunity of saying, It was designed by heaven, to season his uncle, to bear with matrimonial discord. We got into the phaeton, and made the servants whom we disloged, take our places, till the wheels were new-greased. But Mr. Talbot has, indeed, given us both a lasting dislike of fine driving; for, we had fifty hair-breadth escapes, half of which were owing to Lady Eleanor's screams and lectures, while I only entreated him to go slower, to avoid this rut, and that stone —and now that I am safely *housed*, I will own that the poor man has had a precious time of it, *entre nous*. He swears he never will drive Lady Eleanor again—no, not even if he had my patience to weigh against her abominable apprehensions. However, after all our fears, frights and wonderful escapes, we overtook the bride and bridegroom, within ten miles of this place, and are none of us the worse for our journey.

Here I found a very flattering letter from the Dutchess of Birom, who tells me, she could not think of being in the same county, without making an early request to me, That I would do her the favor to spend a few days at the castle, whether her niece and the General can oblige her with a visit or not. She concludes with many kind remarks upon various parts of my conduct, and assuring me that she would derive more real satisfaction from seeing me the wife of her son, if she had one, than from his connexion with the first fortune in the kingdom. She, at the same time, sent me her miniature, and, knowing her as *we* do, I really am vain with this testimony of her approbation. 'Tis her character, not her situation in life, that gives it a value with me. I often wonder at people coveting rank and preeminence, when the advantages are so greatly overbalanced by the inconveniences; for, the actions and the sentiments, should rise in proportion. The very man who would perform a *just* and *generous* action in *private* life, ought to display a *great* and

mighty soul as a Duke. His rank would bring the latter conduct to an equal proportion with the former. Vice affords the direct reverse of the argument; what is *blameable* in private life is *criminal* in an elevated situation, as the influence is more universal, and little minds are apt to mistake rank for virtue. . . . . But whether am I running? This day week, the good Lady dines here, so I must take a jaunt to the castle almost immediately.

I forgot to tell you that Lady Jane got a letter from Mrs. Boringdon, desiring her not to make any engagement elsewhere, until the whole party had made her a comfortable long visit in Hampshire. The Worthys, including Lady Eleanor and Mr. Talbot propose accepting this invitation, but I have requested leave of absence, for the best part of the time, which I mean to devote, if agreeable, to my dear Lady Charlotte. Mrs. Boringdon has her house filled with company, and Sir Francis and

Lady Banmore are upon a visit within five miles, so that I should not quite enjoy the society at Boringdon-Park. I tried to be off the party, without giving my reasons for it, but the General and his obstinate wife insisted upon my accompanying them, till I mentioned my fears of encountering these *interesting* people, and though it was altogether a great chance, yet the apprehension would be too unpleasant to me. They both see the force of my reasoning, and independently of the last consideration, they now think it best to inform Mrs. Boringdon of my *dignities*, as they do not choose that I should run the risk of being addressed with: "Mrs. Julia Thomas, pray, walk up to the nursery," a mortification which my friends are as studious to prevent, as they are anxious to promote my enjoyments.

Dinner is announced, and I must conclude, but not till I have assured my dear Lady Charlotte, that I am truly her affectionate,

JULIA ST. HELEN.

Pray, present my compliments to Mr. Egremont, and request him to frank the enclosed to Mary Thomas.

LETTER XXXIII.

Julia St. Helen to Lady Jane Harrington.

My dear Lady Jane imposed a very agreeable task upon me, when she desired me to write; and, considering it as such, I hasten to inform her that my journey hither has been as pleasant as gentle showers in a very hot day could make it. I found your sister with her head wrapped up, suffering with a violent tooth-ach, which however I contrived to cure with some white-wine-whey. I paid the little boy the kiss you sent him, with interest, for which he very dutifully crowed an enquiry after aunt Jane's health.

In our learned dissertation, last Sunday, on the advantages of writing, we omitted one of its first privileges, which is, That one may avow one's sense of gratitude, without any danger of being silenced, as it is usual to interrupt people when speaking on this head, in the county of Sussex, where I find certain persons traffic very largely in favors, while they declare gratitude for them to be a contraband article.

The housekeeper has this minute raised my curiosity to a most extraordinary pitch, by telling me that a gentleman has been enquiring for me, by my proper name, and expressed great anxiety and interest about my health, regretting my absence from town. She was ignorant of your Hampshire excursion, and therefore, gave him as he desired my direction into Sussex. Had Lady Charlotte been told of the circumstance, she says she would have seen him herself, which I wish to heaven had been the case, as I cannot help thinking of my unfortunate uncle, Sir William, when-

ever any thing of the kind occurs, and the desire I have of restoring peace to his mind, makes me feel a real disappointment, when it proves to be another person. He has already called twice, and, the last time, he gave the housekeeper a letter, without a name, saying, That upon application to the first clerk at the Bank, he would, as usual, enable me to receive some cash. For the first time, the specific sum is not mentioned. I really believe I am ingenious at tormenting myself; for, an idea that Colonel Mollineux has contrived this method to supply me with money, and to quiet his own conscience, has rendered me so extremely uneasy, that I have not one moment's rest. You may be certain the whole world could not prevail upon me to use one penny that should come from him, and it provokes me to think that if *he is* the donor, he must believe me capable of accepting his favors. Mr. Egremont is Job's comforter, for he is sure I have hit upon the right person—of this however I intend to be soon convinced. If Lady

Charlotte is tolerably well to-morrow, she is to accompany me to the Bank, and you may be certain I shall find time for a line of explanation to my dear Lady Jane.

I must not be such a selfish mortal as I now *am*, wholly taken up with my own affairs, but give some account of my commissions—the trunks went yesterday—the harpsichord goes on Tuesday. Lady and Miss Boon visited your sister this morning, and recollecting my phiz as humble Julia Thomas, took no more notice of me than if I had been absent. Lady Charlotte addressed herself to me very particularly, and brought me forward, but all to little purpose; for, a recollection of her behaviour about the flower trimming, which I designed should pay my debt to Mary Thomas, made them ashamed to see me. The old lady was determined to maintain her dignity; but Miss Boon was so close to me, that she could not avoid addressing me, when Lady Charlotte's magic gave her a voice, by asking me, Whether my father,

Sir John Ellisborough, had a right of presentation to the living of Ellisborough, which the ladies were discoursing about. *Compelled* to know me in this *arbitrary* manner, they pretended to be agreeably surprised at meeting me in town, and the daughter declared, She thought it was a face she ought to know, but had her life depended on it, she could not tell where she had seen me. I will not tell you how proud, how impertinent, or ill-natured I was to these despicable characters —to prove that the mother deserves to be included in this uncharitable phrase, I need only tell you that she now paid me the most fulsome compliments—admired my complexion, my hair, my taste in dress, and a frightful ugly tambour-apron, which she supposed was mine, because it lay near me. Here is a fine contrast to my charming old Dutchess.

Lady Charlotte has a large party this evening; but my mind is so engrossed with what to-morrow may bring, that I heartily wish the good folks were now on their way

to their homes again. My paper compels me, if my time did not, to release you; but this is only on condition that you believe me ever your faithful and affectionate,

JULIA ST. HELEN.

LETTER XXXIV.

The same to the same.

ALTHOUGH my hand shakes in such a manner, that it is with difficulty I can guide my pen, yet I will not let the day pass, without imparting to my beloved friends the astonishing events of yesterday, which have quite unsettled me by the extreme agitation I have suffered. In my last, I told your Ladyship of our intended drive to the Bank, to which we accordingly went, and upon my advancing to the clerk, to show him the letter I had received,

he told me, he had already seen it, and was in expectation of the writer's entrance every minute. "Have you seen Mr. Burnet, Madam?" said he. The certainty of his being my uncle, Sir William, rushed upon my mind, and I no longer doubted the American's information. "No," said I; "where does he live?" "Close to the Bank," he replied, "and has placed five-and-thirty thousand pounds in the Three per Cents, in your name." "Heavens!" cried I, "is it possible we shall meet again? Give me his direction—lose not a moment, for I must see him instantly."

Lady Charlotte endeavoured to assuage the hurry of a thousand contending sensations—she entered into all my feelings, and wisely persuaded me to continue where I was, as he was expected every moment. After the longest half hour I ever yet knew, he entered. The meeting was a trial to both—poor man! he could not utter a single word. We unbuckled his stock—got him some drops—and at last were obliged to have him bled, before he could be re-

covered. He is so altered, so emaciated and sun-burnt, that I should not have known him. Your sister insisted upon his going home to dinner, and kept up a perpetual conversation with both, to prevent our talking to each other, and enable us to get a greater degree of composure. After staying till we had drank coffee, she quitted the room, saying she would send to inform us when tea was ready.

When we were alone, Sir William absolutely shocked me, by throwing himself at my feet and imploring my pardon. The posture was so unnatural for the brother of *my* father, that I would not suffer him to continue in it. I besought him to rise. "Never, never," said he, with the greatest emotion, "till I have obtained the forgiveness of my injured niece."

"You have it," said I—"only rise, I entreat you, rise, for I cannot bear your kneeling. For God's sake, be seated again, I forgive and forget, and am only grateful to heaven for restoring you to me."

"Angel of goodness," said he, "behold a most sincere penitent. What misery has my villany produced! I killed my poor wife."

—"Do not so cruelly distress me, Sir William; I beseech you, do not alarm me—Compose yourself, dear uncle—you agitate us both unkindly—exert your fortitude, and let us both be thankful that we have met again, instead of embittering the present by a painful retrospect of the past. To see you again is a blessing I scarcely dared to hope for."

—"My dear, dearest Julia, I have long forfeited all right to beg a blessing from heaven; but I have experienced a singular one—the gratification of the first wish of my heart—I am now able to restore to you that fortune of which my brother, confiding in my honor, left me the guardian—that fortune of which I so infamously defrauded you."

—"Spare me, dear uncle—pray, spare me; you use such harsh terms in censur-

ing yourself, that it hurries me exceedingly. I forget every thing past, and have no other wish but to enjoy the unlooked-for happiness of again meeting with the brother of my father, whose memory will ever be dear to his child."

—"I should be criminal, niece, to enjoy any thing; my sacrificed wife and boy's memories would be insulted by my daring to be happy."

—"Unkind uncle! if you have, as you say, injured me, do not add to it, I earnestly beseech you, by thus cruelly rending my heart. Be thankful to God for his mercy, in giving you a due sense of your errors, and grace to repent them. Be grateful for these blessings, and do not commit a new crime by abandoning yourself to despair. Behold the same Julia St. Helen, anxious as ever to render your life comfortable—solicitous as ever to promote your happiness. Repay me these affectionate inclinations, Sir, by endeavouring to compose your mind. Religion will support you—feel that unbounded confidence in

God's mercy, which his unwearied protection of you demands—we may yet be happy. Example is more enforcing than precept; behold in me, Sir, the proof of its advantages—What could have supported me through all the difficulties I have encountered, but Religion, 'whose ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.' You know my poor aunt was in a deep decline before your departure, and therefore, you are unjust to yourself, if you imagine that you accelerated her death. She would have paid the debt of nature just the same, and at the same period."

—"But not have execrated her destroyer with her last breath."

—"Injure not her memory with so unnatural a supposition—she blessed you in her dying moments—we joined in blessing you—Oh! think with me, dearest uncle, that our prayer was not rejected."

—"My poor boy! yes, thy inhuman father sacrificed thee."

—"And not content with that, would

now sacrifice his niece—you use me very ill, Sir—do not, I intreat you, harrow up my feelings, for I have little strength to contend against them. Your child died of the small-pox; no skill could save him. See in me, my dear Sir William, your truest friend—behold me as your child, as one whose fondest hopes are bent on seeing the remainder of your life perfectly happy: do not then, by this extreme arraignment of yourself, defeat those hopes, but second them."

—"Ought I, my child, *ought* I to be happy? Though I have restored the *debt*, yet the *crime* remains. *You* forgive me, but *I* cannot, *will not* forgive myself."

—"I do indeed, not only forgive, but banish from my remembrance every past unpleasant event. Your contrition, my dear uncle, is so far grateful to my heart, as it proves your return to virtue . . . . . But, I repeat it again, let us forget the past—How long have you been in England?"

—"Only ten days. Upon my first

landing, which was at Dover, I felt an unusual presentiment that something dreadful awaited me. I tried to shake it off, but in vain. I ordered breakfast at the inn, but forgetting that I had done so, I went out and strolled about the town; however, owing to my long confinement on board the ship, I was so soon fatigued, that I enquired for a shorter cut to the inn. I was directed across the church-yard—Your eyes, I perceive, my dear girl, anticipate the sequel—yes, not knowing that I was childless, the stroke was a severe one—the gravestone gave me the angel's little history—Pardon me, my dear niece, I cannot refrain . . . . . From the date, it happened soon after my departure; the English papers mentioned only the death of his injured mother. . . . . "

I was obliged to speak with some caution upon this event, as the poor man had placed the death of this sweet child to his own account. I therefore told him I imagined the dear boy had the small-pox upon him at the time we undertook

the journey, though we were ignorant of it. Our going to Dover was to divert our thoughts, as we were too unhappy to continue at home; but the distemper was of such a malignant kind, that it baffled all our endeavours to save him.

He besought me to tell him how I had been able to support myself till he remitted the first five hundred pounds. "I fear, my dear girl," said he, "you have been as familiar with hardship and sorrow as your uncle—though innocence robbed them of their sting. I thought I had a son; but justice forbade my amassing for him till the utmost farthing should be paid to you; but I will own that justice alone had not preponderated in *my* heart, had I not known the liberality of *yours*. The proof you gave me of the interest you felt for him made me unapprehensive for his fate, when I furnished my amiable Julia with the first remittance, and I determined to restore into your hands both principal and interest, before I appropria-

ted one shilling to my child. You must have been cruelly distressed my Julia?"

"Your meeting with me," I replied, "in a house of such splendor is the best reply I can give you, Sir William. I am beloved and protected by the most estimable beings that ever existed; they have been *almost* an equivalent for the loss of my dearest connexions. Now, that you are returned, Sir, I have nothing left to desire but a relation of all the events that have happened to you, since we parted. Satisfy my present curiosity by a short sketch, and you may give a more circumstantial detail, when we are comfortably settled under the same roof."

—"That can *never* be—to do that I must reconcile myself to myself, which is impossible. I came professedly to make atonement for the injuries I had done you; but I cannot continue in England."

—"Do you, my dear uncle, delight in tormenting me? in filling an aching heart with new anguish? Can you, Sir, wilfully

deprive me of the *only* relation I have in the world? You must not seek to make me wretched—my house, my fortune shall acknowledge you as their master."

—"No, my dear child; a happier lot, I trust, awaits you—a worthier master—a dearer relation—a husband, whose knowledge of your heart shall make him consider the gift of your hand as an invaluable treasure: while *I*, removed to some little sequestered corner of the world, shall rejoice in the idea of a felicity I am unworthy to witness."

—"When I inform you, Sir, that I design never to change my condition, I hope you will make a merit of yielding to a very selfish entreaty on my part. I shall be miserable, unless you do, as I made a voluntary promise to your poor wife, which I do mean strictly to perform. Let us, dear uncle, leave any further controversy, for I am positively and finally determined. Were you, after what I have said, to persist in secluding yourself from the world, you would compel me to quit the society

of these dear disinterested friends, who have, in all my dangers, necessities and distresses, supported and assisted me. It is the first wish of my heart to continue for life in the neighbourhood of such beloved friends, and I hope you will not deprive me of this satisfaction. Should you still persevere in your determination, I know how to make sacrifices to my vow and my duty. I solemnly promised to your poor wife, that if ever I should discover you, I would endeavour to restore you to yourself and the world, and reposing a merited confidence in her niece, she died in the sweet belief that nothing could make me forfeit my word.—Let us now change this topic, and as we have leisure before tea, do, tell me some of the events which have happened to you during your absence."

—" At your desire, my dearest niece, I will retrace those hours of guilt, phrenzy and contrition, which my unworthy conduct so justly brought upon me . . . . "

—" Do not say, *at my desire*, Sir; for heaven knows I would obliterate their re-

membrance from your mind, as effectually as I have from my own."

—" In that ever to be lamented moment, when I abandoned my three inestimable treasures, my soul was so exquisitely tortured with the contrast between your conduct to *my* child, and mine to yourself, that reason had nigh quitted her hold. My conscience galled me to the quick—I had ruined you—ruined the very friend, whose benevolence was forestalling my wants—my abominable vices assumed a new glare, when opposed to such virtues, and I ceased to have any thought, any sensation, but that of abhorrence of myself. Quitting the abode which held every thing dear to me, I walked on, without pausing, for fear of reflection, to Gravesend, where I was fortunate enough to find a vessel ready to sail for Dover. I instantly got on board, and paid the captain's demand for my passage, at the same time calling for spirits, for the express purpose of intoxicating myself—and will you believe me, my dear Julia, during the whole

of the first year, every return to *thought* compelled me to have recourse to this same pernicious expedient, in order to silence the upbraidings of my guilty conscience. On the following day, we landed at Dover. As I and another passenger were ascending the quay, he was met by an acquaintance, whom I heard give him a hearty assurance that he should follow him to New-York in the course of the following year. The idea instantly struck me that America was the proper retreat for me. I had then about eighty guineas in my pocket, which I had procured of my attorney, and meant to have put into my wife's hands, for the purpose of discharging the debts of lodging and housekeeping; but in the joy of seeing that dearest of women so astonishingly recovered from the alarms she had experienced, I had entirely forgot it. Good God! my susceptible Julia, do you remember how amiably endearing her soothing expressions were? My beloved was so gratefully animated with your bounty to her child, that she was unable to contain

her emotions. She beheld you as her guardian angel, snatching her infant from the misery which its barbarous father had entailed upon its helplessness. But I see your eyes are reproaching me, my dearest niece—I will drop the subject.

" I listened very attentively to the conversation that passed between them, and planted myself in the way of the voyager, till I had an opportunity of speaking privately to him. I then acquainted him with my desire of going to America, as also with the very indifferent state of my finances, which made me apply to him, and request he would do me a service, which could not in the least be disadvantageous to himself. The man was astonished at this address from a person who was a perfect stranger to him, until I mentioned my wish, which was, that I might obtain a passage as his servant, which, in that case, would be only half price; and, as I was unknown to him, I promised to place the money in his hands, as soon as he had made the agreement with the captain. To

this he very readily assented, but at the same time, advised me to keep out of the way, as my genteel appearance might be an obstacle to his concluding the bargain. After a few hours absence, he returned with an account of his success, and as the vessel was ready to sail, I lost no time in making some few purchases, and immediately went on board, where I hid myself, as it were, from the light of heaven, until we were far enough at sea to prevent my having a view of the land I had dishonoured by my crimes. There were many passengers besides myself and my *master*, and every one seemed to enjoy his situation, rendered more pleasant by the very fine weather, which continued almost the whole of the voyage. They had not leisure to make any observations upon the only wretched being among them, except my good-natured friend, who perceived the melancholy which was preying upon my mind, and endeavoured to alleviate it, not only with his sensible conversation, but with a thousand nameless attentions, which

were exerted to recover me from a violent fever, the consequence of my perpetual internal reproaches.

"He now repeatedly urged me to unbosom myself, and rely upon his friendly wishes to serve me. I could not prevail upon myself to reward his kindness with the confidence it merited—I spared him the mortification of knowing that he was professing friendship for a man, who had broken through every tie of honor, justice and faith—whose crimes had driven him from his country—who had been compelled to....."

Here I stopped him—and here *I* stop. My dear Lady Jane will be so good as to reflect, that leisure for writing is now become rather difficult. To-morrow, I will rise early, to go on. Till then, adieu!

JULIA ST. HELEN.

LETTER XXXV.

The same to the same.

"We had a very quick voyage," said my uncle," and when we came to anchor, Mr. Stanley, for such was the name of my *master*, took me aside and enquired what were the plans I intended to pursue during my stay in America, as he had conceived a sincere friendship for me, and wished I might be inclined to put it to the test. He had connexions in most of the States, and would willingly give me a letter of recommendation to some mercantile house, that would pay a due regard to it and render my residence agreeable.

"'Sir', said I, 'your kind and affectionate concern has made a deep impression upon me. Unworthy as I am of your esteem, reserve would make me still more so--bankrupt in peace, I have formed no

plan to pursue for the remnant of a life so little desirable. The confused state of my affairs has led me into imprudencies, which will put it out of my power *ever* to return to England. I left my friends and connexions in a very abrupt manner, and entirely ignorant of my fate. I am a gentleman of good family, who will endeavour to do honor to your recommendation by every exertion in my power. Could I obtain a situation as a clerk to a merchant, I should think myself a fortunate being. I never was in any employment of the kind, but zeal and industry will overcome every difficulty I may meet with in the beginning.' He assured me he would write immediately to a very intimate friend of his, at Philadelphia, who was growing infirm, and he doubted not that, at his desire, he would receive me as an active person, who would render *his* attention less necessary to the business. In the mean time, he invited me to take up my residence with him, at New-York, where he would employ his leisure hours in giving me every possible in-

struction previous to my going to Philadelphia. No brother ever evinced a more sincere affection to another than this excellent man did to an unfortunate stranger. Words are inadequate to convey the deep sense I entertained of his kindness, which was never interrupted while there remained a possibility of adding to my comforts. In the course of a few weeks, he received a most satisfactory answer from his correspondent, giving him liberty to make any agreement with me that he might think proper, as he should stand by Mr. Stanley's engagement. He wished it to be liberal, as he should treat me as a friend, in consideration of my taking all the superintending part of the business out of his hands, his health requiring both leisure and retirement. I, however, persuaded my friend Stanley to decline fixing my salary, as that was but a very secondary consideration with me, but I requested that he would answer for me to Mr. Drury, that I would endeavour to discharge the trust reposed in me, to the full extent of my power.

"Every thing being settled for my departure, I took leave of Mr. Stanley, with a heart overburthened with gratitude, and received a letter of recommendation to a sister of his, who had married a man of independent fortune, at Philadelphia. There, I was entertained for a whole fortnight, that is, the time which elapsed between my arrival and Mr. Drury's return from the country, where he had been confined by illness. This lady's sensible conversation and benevolent manner won so far upon my spirits, that, for a time, I almost forgot my crimes and my punishment, and when Mr. Drury came to town, I found myself so much employed, that I had little leisure for reflection. I found in that merchant a generous friend and a pleasing, cheerful companion, notwithstanding the indisposition which was gradually undermining his constitution, and of which he was perfectly sensible. At the end of the first week, he settled upon me two hundred a-year, and in many subsequent transactions, convinced me that he had an uncommon liberality of

soul. He had been married upwards of ten years to a very beautiful woman, full thirty years younger than himself. He had no children, which induced him to give very expensive educations to his two nephews, to whom he intended leaving his fortune. These four and myself composed the family, though there were several subordinate clerks in the house. My situation was rendered every way so comfortable, that my composure returned, and hope by degrees reanimated my soul with the prospect of doing some little justice to my injured Julia, whose unprovided state employed more of my thoughts than even my anxieties for my orphan boy. I had no right to lay by for him, till I had been just to you.

"In this family have I continued till within the last half-year, when the long expected death of my excellent friend, Mr. Drury, compelled me to leave the house, from motives of propriety to his amiable wife. But this event was not attended with any inconvenience to me, as her husband had bequeathed me one thousand

pounds payable a month after his decease. This, with the addition of what he had allowed me to make upon my own account in trade, he imagined would enable me to push my fortune in a manner more agreeable to me. To his widow he left upwards of forty thousand pounds at her own disposal, and as a further mark of his affection, he made her owner of the two principal estates for her life, with the reversion to his nephews, to whom he bequeathed three thousand pounds each, payable in as many months.

"When this will was communicated to the two young men, they became highly exasperated at the disposition of their uncle's property, and determined to charge Mrs. Drury with having, in his last illness, estranged his affections from his own nephews. The part I naturally took in the vindication of a woman so absolutely incapable of every interested action, involved me, to my utter astonishment in a share of the opprobrium they so liberally bestowed on the widow of Mr. Drury; but the mani-

festation of this they agreed to delay, until they had an opportunity of conveying their resentments in words; for, now she was confined to her own apartment. The morning after the funeral, she sent to request my attendance, when she put into my hands two letters of attorney, which she desired I would immediately deliver to her nephews. 'Charmed as I am,' said she, 'at this new proof of my husband's attachment and confidence, yet I feel for the temporary disappointment which these young men, who were taught to expect immediate possession, must have experienced. Tell them, I with pleasure renounce these acquisitions of income for two reasons; first, that it makes me more worthy of their dear uncle's kindness; and secondly, that they shall not pray for my death.' I carried this message, and witnessed the effects of *such* a reproof.

"Still possessing one thousand pounds, after having remitted to my dear niece five hundred pounds, at two different periods, I formed the design of returning to England,

for the express purpose of putting the remainder into your hands, and afterwards returning with my boy to America, where I thought I should be able to bring him forward, under the auspices of Mr. Stanley, for the English newspapers, as I have already told you, had only mentioned his irreparable loss in the death of his mother. During my stay with this hospitable man, who was now a resident in Philadelphia, I studiously secluded myself from the inquiring eyes of my friends, and gave way to all my grief, though I endeavoured to conceal it, by forbearing to put myself in mourning. But I had more real anguish at heart . . . . . Nay, Julia, I am not relapsing—

"Though I had quitted the house of Mrs. Drury, yet I daily spent several hours in her society, from that most solid of all attachments, a similarity in suffering. She regretted the loss of her companion in expressions so according with my own, that I felt myself relieved by the conversation. In one of these, she gave me her own par-

ticular history, which was by no means exempt from the universal lot of troubles and disappointments; and in relating the pecuniary embarrassments under which she had laboured, till she fortunately met with Mr. Drury, she gave me so high an opinion of her heart, that I ventured on a partial confession of my own misfortunes, which she attended to with a peculiar degree of interest, making at the time such sensible and pious remarks, and displaying such a firm and settled confidence in God, that she partly succeeded in calming the agitation of my mind.

"Mrs. Drury was still suffering from the ill effects of a fever, so common in the West Indies, which to me, more than any other circumstance, accounted for a very extraordinary depression of spirits, to which she was by no means naturally subject. She assured me that her separation from her beloved friend, Mr. Drury, would be but of a short duration, as she felt herself decline daily, 'This anticipation would be unpardonable, Mr. Burnet,' said

she, 'had I not promised myself the pleasing satisfaction of rendering you independent of the world, as a testimony of my friendship and regard; and this intention I now communicate to you, in the hope that it will aid you in recovering that serenity of mind, which has been so much obscured by misfortune. If you are not afraid of reposing a confidence in me, who am so unfeignedly your friend, be more diffuse in your relation of the particulars of a life which I am desirous of rendering more happy. Give me another instance of the "Vanity of human wishes;" for, by opening your mind, without any restraint, you will *cleanse the full bosom of that perilous stuff, which weighs upon the heart.*

I no longer felt any reluctance to disclose to this estimable woman every circumstance of my past life, and without seeking to lessen crimes, which could not be exaggerated, I revealed every scene of my iniquitous transactions, with all the abhorrence the recollection inspired. My tears of contrition were answered by tears

of sensibility, and she endeavoured to restore me to my own good opinion, by assuring me that hers was considerably increased by the candid confession I had made of my errors. On the following day, she informed me of an alteration she had made in her will, which before was only charged with the half of whatever she should possess at her death; but so deep an impression had my repentance, and my niece's sufferings and virtues, made upon her mind, that she was determined to leave me sufficient to make her ample attonement. 'And this,' said she, 'is my fixed and unalterable determination, which I shall fulfil without any remorse, as my husband's nephews, forgetting every humane, just and delicate idea, injured my character with ungenerous surmises, in the first moment of my calamity. I was a stranger to this circumstance at the time I put them in possession of my own estates, at which I am heartily glad, because, although it would not have altered my conduct towards them, yet it would have carried an air of

reproach along with it, less natural for me to *give*, than for them to *feel*. But you do not seem, my dear Mr. Burnet, to share with me that satisfaction which must be the consequence of restoring your amiable ward to that rank in life, to which she was entitled, and which she so justly deserved. I shall not withhold your property long—What plan have you in contemplation? Where do you mean to fix for life?'

"Whatever my sensations of gratitude to her were, my dear Julia, they were equalled by my desire of making you the most immediate restitution. I expressed as well as I was able my feelings upon both subjects, and assured her that I had not the smallest intention of remaining in England, after having forfeited every claim of family, friendship and public esteem, but that I should most undoubtedly impose upon myself the task of personally implor-ing my niece's forgiveness. The instant after I had invested you with full power over the principal and interest of the debt, I would return to Philadelphia.—

The remainder, said I, must be reserved for my boy—for my boy, my dear, sympathizing Julia!—but these tears are ineffectual—Heaven punished me very severely, but I deserved it.—"

"I must not suffer you to proceed, my dear uncle," said I, "if you thus incessantly seek for opportunities of condemning yourself. Repentance should wash away those traces in your own breast which it has undoubtedly done in heaven. Had *I* been tempted, with all my untried notions of rectitude, I also might have fallen. 'Lead me not into temptation,' has been my constant supplication—it has been heard, and I have escaped the danger. But I will not let you exhaust yourself any more—I hear Lady Charlotte's bell for tea; therefore, you must postpone every further account of your interesting Mrs. Drury till to-morrow." To this he readily agreed; and indeed we both stood in need of a respite.

Your sister perceived, from observing our eyes, that the conversation had been

trying to our feelings, and her placid disposition never appeared more enchantingly amiable than this evening. With her eyes full of tears, she talked of any and every indifferent thing, and often forced a smile from us, to which her heart remained a stranger. The entrance of Mr. Egremont, and the joint endeavours of him and his wife to raise the dejected spirits of my uncle were not unsuccessful. At supper, he was rather cheerful than otherwise, and the possibility of beholding him *thus* more frequently from my own endeavours, made me regain my usual flow of spirits. Lady Charlotte sent him home in her carriage, after exacting his promise to reside in our neighbourhood, and to spend the next day at her house. We are now preparing to go for him, but I knew how impossible it would be to conclude this after his entrance, for which reason, I took my breakfast at an early hour, in my own apartment, that I might be able to scribble on to my friend. Indeed, my dear Lady Jane, I must be in terrible want of repose, before

I prefer my pillow to even a black-and-white conversation with you. As yet, I cannot foresee the hour when I may hope to rejoin you, a consideration, which makes me alternately merry and sad, when I reflect how all my fond hopes of regaining Sir William are realized. However, I mean to be even with fortune. I *shall* have *my* house, and receive *my* friend under its roof—and I will imitate my beloved Jane so closely in all my actions, that I *must* be happy, because I *will* deserve to be so. . . With my best love to your dear General, I take my leave, subscribing myself ever your affectionate,

JULIA ST. HELEN.

LETTER XXXVI.

The same to the same.

When I had concluded my letter to your Ladyship yesterday, I carried it to Lady Charlotte, for perusal, as the quickest method of making her acquainted with Sir William's narrative, of which I could only relate some detached pieces, on account of the perpetual interruptions we were exposed to, from the successive entrance of company. Indeed I am little calculated to do it justice; a sleepless night, after a day of agitation, has half overset me. My dear friend insists upon my avoiding such hurrying conversations, unless she herself is present, as a check upon my poor uncle, as she sees that it really has injured my health. She, therefore, advised me to inform Sir William that I had no reserves of

any kind for her or her sister, which would induce him to proceed in speaking of his affairs before her. This I did with all possible delicacy, and, after dinner, reminded him that, as Mr. Egremont was not of our party, we were both very impatient to hear a continuation of his history. Lady Charlotte seconded my request in so conciliating a manner, that my uncle no longer hesitated.

"I will give over," said he, "every attempt to describe the sensations which rose in my breast at this conversation; my heart was too full, to allow of common expressions of gratitude. Mrs. Drury knew what I felt, and endeavoured to introduce trifling subjects, to give me time to regulate my emotions. Finding, however, in my subsequent visits, that I was overpowered with contending ideas, she left me in possession of her house, and retired to a small residence she had about two miles from town. From this place she never returned; for, her complaints encreased so rapidly, that she could not be re-

moved without imminent hazard. There I also took my abode, devoting my whole time to an alleviation of her sufferings, by reading, conversing and playing on the flute.

" About a month after, Mrs. Drury received a letter from the attorney who had drawn up her will in my favor, expressing an apprehension lest Mr. James Drury, her nephew, should be able to set her will wholly aside, as he had already some suspicions of being deprived of her fortune, and had, in consequence of them, hinted his intentions in a public company. The attorney received orders to examine very minutely the testament of old Mr. Drury, and to lose no time in acquainting his widow with the result, which was, That Mr. James Drury would undoubtedly succeed in a court of law, in recovering whatever Mrs. Drury died possessed of, unless she married again; ' for which reason,' said he, ' if I might advise you, and Mr. Burnet is at liberty, you would put your property

out of Mr. James Drury's power, by an union of hands.'

"You will now, my dear niece, allow that I gave a most sincere proof of my contrition by the conduct I pursued on this occasion. If I committed *one* breach of faith to injure you, I committed a *second* to do you justice. You are ignorant of a folly, to call it by no harsher name, of which your dear aunt and I were guilty on the day of our marriage. 'We vowed by all things most sacred, both on earth and in heaven, that, whichever died first, the survivor would not marry again.' We were so ardent in our unextorted protestations, that we unthinkingly presumed to invoke the most dreadful vengeance to overtake us, if ever any advantage to ourselves or families should lead us to receive a successor. A recollection of this scene, and the earnest manner in which I had expressed myself at the moment, made me revolt at the lawyer's proposal. The repugnance I felt was so violent, that acquiescence was absolutely impossible: but I

made no difficulty in acquainting Mrs. Drury with my embarrassment, at the same time, professing my determination to submit to my destiny, sooner than add this crime to the long catalogue of those already committed.

"She made use of every argument she could devise, to persuade me that it was by far a greater crime to be unjust to the child of my brother, than to break an oath, which could not affect any creature living; that if the emolument was to *myself*, she should think I did right in withstanding it; but being designed for a being whom I had wronged, it became an act, not only of justice, but even of honor, and of duty.

"All these arguments, however, did little more than add to my wretchedness. I knew I must derive, at least, a mental advantage from seeing you happy, and the fervor with which I had invoked the vengeance of heaven in that reprehensible moment, was opposed to the extreme wants, and strong claims, which were attached to

my dear Julia. Those wants and claims, however powerful, were discarded, when brought in competition with my vow. 'Twas now my excellent friend assured me, that the last moments of her life would be embittered by my unfortunate obstinacy, unless I would consult the opinion of her pious and learned acquaintance, Dr. Fieldham, to whose decision she would implicitly submit, if it was against her own; as it was impossible I could be more attached to my argument than she was to hers, she expected the same acquiescence on my part, should his decree be favourable to her expectations. To these terms I submitted.

"Dr. Fieldham heard all I thought necessary to urge on my part, after which Mrs. Drury offered her judicious remarks upon what I had said; then turning to me, he said: 'If the benefits arising from this act were to accrue to your individual self, Sir, I would advise, nay, exhort you by all means to forego them; but, as they are intended to expiate an injury, and to make

atonement to your niece, I shall, not only advise, but exhort you to do your absolute duty, by accepting the means of restitution, without any further hesitation.' A short term of dispassionate reasoning persuaded me that I should be acting right by making the sacrifice of my oath.

"We voluntarily postponed the day, till her danger rendered our union necessary, and in the hour she breathed her last, we were joined—to part for ever. I naturally felt every tender and affectionate sentiment for a being so peculiarly attached to my interests. After performing the last sad offices of friendship, and having presented the principal house and its furniture to my dear Mr. Stanley, and the elegant little country retirement to his sister, I set out for New-York, and soon took my passage for England. And now, my dear, the voyage and its purport being accomplished, I shall prepare to return to that part of the globe, where the vices and crimes, nay, even the name of Sir William

Ellisborough are unknown."—Lady Charlotte robs me of my pen. . . . .

Yes, indeed do I, Jane, almost by force—she looks as pale as possible, which is the reason I will not suffer her to write another word; but, as I was present at the conversation, I will go on with the narrative. Sir William was expressing his intention of returning to some place where his vices and crimes were unknown.

" Not without *me*," said the interesting Julia; " You are my father's brother; deprived of that first, most dear connexion—a stranger to the blessing of a fond indulgent mother—without *one* relation in the world, except yourself—would you desert me? Allowing, Sir, that the crimes you acknowledge *are* so heinous, are they not obliterated by your sincere return to virtue, justice and honor? So far from any opprobrium attaching to your name, the candid mind and benevolent heart will behold you in an elevated point of view; will regard and esteem the man

whose contrition is so unfeigned; will allow that, "To err is human—" Sir William and I exclaimed at the same time: "To *forgive*, divine"—I think the application was just.

"Come, my dear uncle," continued his energetic niece, "you must now absolutely be ruled by me. From *this* moment, you must regard me as your child. I will confess, that I am the most selfish of human beings in this request—I cannot be happy myself, unless you comply with my wish—but, remember, *I must* reside in a place where I can enjoy the society of these dear and attached friends. Join with me, Lady Charlotte; join with me in persuading Sir William, that he ought to be guided by his supplicating niece—my whole comfort is at stake—you must not deny me."

"Excellent girl!" he exclaimed; "when I hear that very being whom I have so cruelly injured, plead in the soothing, interesting, persuasive manner she now does, I am inclined to believe that a female an-

gel has taken her residence below." I was so charmed with the energy with which he spoke, that I could not refrain from adding: "If you knew but half of what I know, Sir William, you would indeed believe it." I need not tell you that conscious guilt could not have given a deeper crimson to her cheeks than these words occasioned. She gave my hand one of her expressive squeezes, while she looked volumes of thanks, *not* to me, *not* to her uncle, but to heaven.

Sir William has, at length, consented to spend a few weeks at the Lodge, whither we propose going in a fortnight. Its vicinity to town will enable Julia to look after her house, without any inconvenience whatever, as all the mornings will be at her own disposal. I long for your Hampshire visit to come to its conclusion, and we all heartily pray, that Mrs. Boringdon may get tired of you and your husband, and send you packing to us. I have no occasion to show the dear girl this continuation of her letter, therefore, I shall freely speak my

mind. Mr. Egremont and I had resolved to keep, if not quite aloof, at least remarkably distant from Sir William Ellisborough, as his conduct certainly deserved it; but both our resolves have entirely given way; for, a more sensible, interesting, agreeable man we never beheld. The tender melancholy interwoven in his countenance, seems so natural to him, that it prepossesses one in his favor, before one is aware of it. My good husband is entirely taken up with him, and this attention has already raised the poor man in his own estimation.

I am sure you will be happy to hear that my aunt Birom threw a five hundred pound note into the cradle this morning, assuring me, That, since we were come to our *senses*, she should do more. My dear life keeps no expensive company just now, and I have the supreme satisfaction of seeing hi. a happier man than he was when we married. His principles are confirmed, and his mind kept cheerful and light, by my desire to please him—I own myself very

grateful for my lot. May yours, my dear Jane, be equally fortunate, is the most cordial wish of your affectionate sister,

CHARLOTTE EGREMONT.

LETTER XXXVII.

Lady Jane Harrington to Julia St. Helen.

You can scarcely imagine what sincere satisfaction I feel at the contents of your last two letters, since I perceived so strong a desire, in every part of your affecting narrative, to meet with your uncle again, as well as to perform your voluntary promise to his poor unfortunate wife. I do most unfeignedly rejoice at the accomplishment of my dear Julia's wishes, although it deprives me of so large a share in her society. I speak from my heart, when I

assure her, that I consider myself as a most essential sufferer by this unexpected event. Even in the midst of my present felicity, the wife of the best of men, I still want her presence. The ties of nature could not have added force to that affection which I feel for my adopted sister. The General has resolved to abridge our visit to this charming place, for the purpose of rejoining our friends in Grosvenor-Square, where we are anxious to embrace my dear girl, and be introduced to her uncle. Charlotte informs me of your being in search of a house, and of your consequent jaunts about the neighbourhood of the Lodge. I shall, very frequently, request a tête-à-tête in the chaise, as I intend using my endeavours to reform that wicked obstinate heart of yours.

I am convinced you will readily believe me, when I assure you upon my honor that I *had* complied wih Mr. Talbot's request to deliver to you the following information, before ever yourself had any suspicion of so soon regaining your fortune. He

wished me to open the subject on the very morning you left us; but, as I expected your return from Mr. Egremont to your *own home*, I absolutely declined performing the commission, until I actually had you in my power again. The alteration in all my agreeable plans, from Sir William's coming to England, is a motive with this innamorato for becoming most importunate. I, therefore, venture to tell you That I entertain a very high opinion of his heart. His being General Harrington's nephew neither enhances his merits, nor lessens his defects, but I endeavour to speak very impartially, when I say that he possesses a liberal, generous, candid disposition, a well-cultivated mind, and, his uncle assures me, more good-nature than ever he met with. Add to these qualifications an estate of fifteen hundred a year, and great expectations. When he first informed us of his intentions, we promised to exert our influence in his behalf—recollect that none of us knew of the good that awaited you, which proves the disinterestedness of the Trio,

particularly of Mr. Talbot, whose sentiments are really of a noble kind. I do truly believe you would find your happiness greatly augmented by uniting your fate with that of a man, whose character is so perfectly unexceptionable. I only prepare you for the discussion I shall seek in our first leisure moments, when we will enter upon its merits at large.

Talbot goes to-morrow to Durham, for the purpose of giving his cousin Lady Eleanor Bagot away to his brother. I fear this match will not produce all the joy to the parties which they at present think so certain. She has very expensive fashionable notions, and he is a younger brother, with five hundred a year of his own, and a captain's commission into the bargain. She has twenty thousand, but her ideas are capacious enough to dissipate that sum in twice as many months. Talbot anticipates her *dispatch* with a vast deal of humor.

Charlotte has given a postscript about her caro sposo, with which I am greatly

delighted. She is sensible that his pleasing reformation is the fruit of my dear Julia St. Helen's friendship, and she esteems and loves her accordingly. You may well believe that I feel a most sincere satisfaction at this change. Her happiness is indeed very dear to me. What a source of blessings has that sister been to your Jane! for, I differ widely from Lady Eleanor, who thanked heaven for being an *only* child, as a second would have shared the half of her fortune. It seems so unnatural to possess such selfish ideas! I think I should gladly have quartered mine with such dear relations.

Perhaps it is unwise in me to tell you that I was last night struck with a very pretty little figure at the ball. General Harrington sat down to cards at the same table, and you may well imagine his surprise when her husband and partner said 'It was Lady Banmore's deal.' It really was so unexpected a circumstance, that after hearing this, he did not know a card from another. The rubber was concluded

when I came. She is a very pretty, elegant, little woman, with an interesting countenance, and graceful manner. Fanny is a delicate looking girl, her hair flat upon her forehead and curled in her neck—she appears under twelve years of age. They knew every body, and upon enquiry, I found they were residing at Southampton. Little did Sir Francis imagine that we were both commenting upon his private history for the remainder of the evening. I think he rather limps in the right leg than not, but this may proceed from my being acquainted with his accident, more than from reality. This morning, the men met again upon the Quay; but the General wishes to avoid an acquaintance with this pleasing man, solely on account of our dear Julia, and therefore did not encourage a conversation which Sir Francis had begun.

That superannuated old beau, Bellamy is here. You know he always has a penchant for the Toast of the day, which led the poor soul to say so many absurd, ridi-

culous, soft things to me, that I was determined to cure him, the very first opportunity—and a glorious one offered this evening at a card assembly at the Poligon. This enamoured swain, after "ogling and all that," throughout the whole day, made the fourth at the table at which I was playing. You must know that this irresistible Memento Mori is as tender of a young lady's flesh as he would be of her reputation, for which reason, he never presses her foot, without first pulling off his shoe. Now, the devil certainly owed him a grudge; for, he put it into my head to drop a card, for the very purpose of stealing his shoe and conveying it into my pocket. When the rubber was ended, every one left the table but Bellamy, who was in the utmost distress, fumbling about under every chair, to regain his shoe, to my no small diversion. The lady of the house and her friends, enquired what he was seeking for, supposing he had dropped some money. I whispered my trick to the General, who enjoyed it exceedingly, and

marched up to the table, saying; "Bellamy, have you lost any thing?" "Why, yes," he replied; "this deuced gout obliged me to pull off my shoe . . . ."—"Aye, and the pulling off your shoe proved your gout—By-the-by, I dare say it was yours I saw in my wife's pocket—here, Lady Jane, do, come and restore it"—which I did, with a thousand apologies, and making a profound curtsey, to the great confusion of my venerable admirer. Now, be candid, don't you think me an ill-natured creature?

Make my joint loves acceptable to the whole *partie quarrée*, and believe me ever your true friend,

JANE HARRINGTON.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Julia St. Helen to Lady Jane Harrington.

I CANNOT be one hour in possession of my dear Lady Jane's letter, without returning her my best thanks for the very affectionate manner in which she congratulates me on the recovery of my lost sheep. Believe me, I am more happy now than ever I expected to be. The united endeavours of Mr. Egremont and your sister, have already given my dear uncle a more cheerful aspect. Lady Charlotte introduces him to every body, and I am persuaded, from the universal respect which he inspires, that the unfortunate story to which he gave birth is altogether forgotten. Without trusting to the panegyric of a wife for authority, you may be certain that Mr. Egremont is quite a new being, the house is admirably well managed—its

mistress looks after it—no superfluous expence, though every thing is upon a liberal scale—in short, they are a very happy rational pair, and heartily laugh at former ideas, which now they truly despise.

One part of my loved friend's letter gave me, I own, very sincere pain. Surely, I have a thousand times declared to Lady Jane, that no circumstance, no threatened indigence, could ever induce me to marry. Tell this to Mr. Talbot as from yourself; save him the mortification of a refusal. You know me well enough to be convinced that a direct proposal from himself would distress me extremely. I do earnestly entreat you to conceal from him what you have mentioned to me; say that you know it would be vain to attempt altering my resolution, for indeed, Jane, I am unalterable. Do not think that it proceeds from a silly vow to live single, out of regard for a man who no longer cares for me; indeed it is not, it proceeds from the conviction that I never can love *any other*. When I say I never *will* marry, I may also say that

I will accept the first man who is agreeable to me—these seeming contradictions mean one and the same thing. I *never can* meet with the person who *will* be agreeable to me; my heart never can feel this requisite affection for any other—there is a void in it, which never can be filled up again. There is no criminality in thinking of Sir Francis *now;* there would be, if I altered my condition—and yet, all these thoughts are what I ask heaven to witness—they are my morning and evening prayers for his felicity—which include every blessing for his wife. With unbounded ardor does my humble petition arise, saying:

> Hail universal Lord! be bounteous still to
> give him only good,
> And if this day hath gathered aught of evil, or
> conceal'd,
> Disperse it, as the light dispels the dark.

and this is the invocation I open my eyes with, and ever will be so while I exist.

I am gratified with your account of his wife, and happy to find that you think them visibly attached to each other. Do his spirits seem good? How could you forget such an interesting information? His health and prosperity are very dear to me—You judge right, I would not meet with him for millions.

Imagine my surprise and hurry, when Colonel Mollineux came into our box, by accident, last night. Thank heaven, Mr. Egremont did not know him personally, otherwise, he protests he would have turned him out by the shoulders. I had such an instantaneous presentiment that he would, that I commanded my own feelings beyond what I imagined was possible, and have now persuaded him, that his ever taking any resentful measures with him would be doing me an irreparable injury, in the first place, by rendering the mortifying story public, and in the second, by reviving anecdotes of the Ellisborough family, which otherwise will remain undisturbed. Mr. Egremont acknowledges the justness

of my remarks, and promises never to take any notice whatever of this worthless man, whose surprise must undoubtedly have been great, at beholding me in such style and with such people. Had Sir William been of the party, I know not what could have been done, as my uncle would certainly have spoken to his old acquaintance. Guilt would have silenced the Colonel, till Sir William had addressed him.

I am just returned from seeing their houses, one of which pleases me extremely. You will wonder at my taking a ready-furnished one, but it is so elegantly fitted up, and the furniture so handsome, having been used only a twelvemonth by a fashionable pair, who are under the necessity of visiting Brussels, that I could not withstand the temptation, especially as it is fit to receive us now. Mr. Egremont has been entirely over it, and assures me it is the completest house in town, and the terms by no means exorbitant, all things considered; though your *servant-maid* imagines you will think her

very extravagant to give five hundred and fifty pounds a-year for her *lodging*, now that she is *out of place*, and whose wages were only twelve guineas a-year—really, I am shocked at myself.

I propose getting into my new abode on this day week, and think how earnestly I covet having my dear Lady Jane and her General under my roof!—It is quite *impossible!* You must have been *me*—have endured all *my* distresses--have been extricated in the humane, delicate and amiable manner in which you have extricated *me*, before you *can* imagine what I feel at having you become my guest. I will not mortify myself by supposing you want persuasion.

I am become a complete egotist, for you must hear more of my doings. My carriage is of a very elegant form, but as plain, quiet and tame as its owner. I had thoughts of putting my arms on in a lozenge, but your brother swears he will daub them over with a common paint brush, and Lady Charlotte is wicked

enough to say, that she will hold the pan, advising me at the same time to wait patiently for the day which is to make me twenty-five, before I profess old-maidenism. I am now a noviciate, and four months will obtain your sister's licence for this indulgence. I am sure Mr. Egremont would be as good as his word. You will naturally suppose I used every argument in my power to prevail upon my uncle to let the carriage bear his arms, assuring him that it would give me respectability, but he will not hear the voice of the charmer, charm she ever so wisely.

Now for a *bonne bouche*—In my return from the coachmaker's, I passed the door of the ever-memorable linen-warehouse in Oxford-Street. I determined to make a purchase, by way of indulging the still small voice of gratitude that expanded my heart at this instant. Could I, my friend, stand near *that* counter against which I formerly leaned, when destitute of character, as well as every necessary of life, without addressing my thanks to the Father of

Mercies, who has thus bounteously showered down his blessings upon me? My mind's eye beheld the solitary shilling which was laid before me, when I felt faint and sick with want—I heard in idea, the shopman's compassionate declaration, "That he pitied me from the bottom of his soul"—but I cannot convey the state of my feelings; I can only say that they were exquisitely pleasing. I had long wished to reward the benevolent creature, and the method was now easy. I made the purchase of him, and took his receipt, which gave me his *name*. At my return, I had the gratification of enclosing him a bank-note, as an encouragement to do good to the friendless, telling him, "That it was a tribute of gratitude offered by a young woman, who was in the greatest distress, about three years ago, when he kindly gave her a shilling." I folded it up, and sent it by the penny-post to Mr. James Butler, and I doubt not that he got it safe, as I put it into the receiving box with my own hands.

I have written to Mary Thomas, to know whether she would prefer an annuity of fifty pounds, and continue where she is, or come up to town and dwell in my house, as an humble friend. I have told her of the hurry and bustle which must be expected, even in my quiet regular abode, after the calm attendant on a village life. She, however, prefers being with me to every thing else, and a few days will bring this worthy creature to town. I own I expect she will shortly languish for her little cottage again; for, at sixty, she must feel a particular attachment to her old habits, and though I mean to make it a study to anticipate her wishes and wants, yet I may not succeed in making her hours pass as rapidly as in her own little dwelling.

Let me hear from you soon, and recollect to make my best acknowledgements to Mrs. Boringdon, for all her attentions to me while I was at Kensington. Tell your General that I mean to refurnish my dressing-room in the most complete style, but that I shall wait till I can have the be-

nefit of his taste and judgment in this weighty affair. You see I am determined to have it uncommonly elegant, which is the only reason I shall give for my employing him.

Am I not, my dear *mistress*, a most saucy, familiar *servant?* Yes, I am, and what is worse, I glory in being so. You have raised my spirits half a dozen degrees by your letter to Lady Charlotte, because you assign my motives for action to their just causes. I am sorry I have *yet* to persuade the General that I speak from conviction—be your own judge now, but, for God's sake, do not let your husband see this proof of my excessive weakness—a trifling occurrence this very morning explained me most forcibly to myself—convinced me, that my little remains of happiness would be destroyed by excluding Sir Francis Banmore from my mind—and did I marry, I would do *this*, whatever it cost me—While I am single, there is no crime in following him with my prayers and best wishes—but to the occurrence.

In my way home, this morning, I was importuned by a lame sailor for charity. I had neither silver nor halfpence, and therefore advised him not to lose his time by following me. I asked my servant, but he had no money. The man continued his entreaty, without softening my heart, (which James Butler, the linen-draper, had taken possession of for the hour) though I saw him excessively lame. After a string of misfortunes, he added: "And, Madam, I was taken prisoner and carried into France, where I *broke my leg.*"—— He expressed his thanks for the only half-guinea I had about me—In this state of my heart, Jane, ought I to marry? I am almost sorry that I have told thus much even to you; but I will have no disguises. I have seen him this very morning, in my return, near Burlington-house. Though my veil was down, yet he certainly knew me, and now that I have leisure to think, I fear my being attended by a livery-servant may have excited his curiosity, as he must know I am not the wife of Mr.

Ford. I was forced to go into a shop for a glass of water. What were my thoughts, at reflecting that he apparently had cause for thinking amiss of me! The supposition is agony to me, but it never can be done away. I have resignation for every other evil upon earth but *this*, but even here, I will *act* as if I had obtained it.

How dare I dwell upon this forbidden theme? I ought to forget it, and will instantly endeavour to do so, by laying down my pen. I am angry at myself for giving way to this wrong propensity, and will studiously avoid a repetition of my error. This very day is the anniversary of his marriage; may he see many returns of it—and as happy as I would have endeavoured to make them.

I hear from nurse that Lady Banmore is truly amiable, and this is the highest source of satisfaction to me. I have voluntarily foregone the greatest happiness I can conceive, that of folding *their* dear little babe to my heart. I have often followed it round and round the Square,

without daring to speak to its nurse, though my heart leaped to embrace it. Indeed I never have done so improper a thing, lest the emotion I must feel at holding *his* child in my arms should have excited its nurse's curiosity. No, my friend, I have denied myself even this innocent, yet extatic satisfaction. My spirits are got abominably low, but having seen him, and on the anniversary too, must serve as my apology. I will *sin* no more; but then I must throw away my pen, ask your pardon, and promise to be a good child for the future. If the post disappoints me tomorrow, I shall grow outrageous; but I will not think so ill of my dear Jane as to suppose it will come without a letter.

Sir William amends daily—you will both be charmed with him. Once more, adieu; say every thing for me to the General, and do justice to the heart of your faithful,

JULIA ST. HELEN.

LETTER XXXIX.

The same to the same.

I AM sorry at my heart that I suffered the vile letter of this day week to reach your hands. The only apology I can offer for conveying my low spirits to you, is the extreme gloom I had imbibed from seeing *him* look so far from well. His indisposition never fails to have this effect upon his sincere friend Julia. The blue devils tormented me yesterday with the idea that the servant who attended me would have arrested his attention, and excited his further curiosity; but, in the first place, he certainly will not care about me, and in the second, he would not enquire after me, if he did. Such a worthless creature, as he *believes* me to be, is not entitled to a thought—Am I not relapsing? — —

Nurse Thomas makes her appearance on Tuesday. She seems to be superlatively happy, and satisfied with the events of this world, during the last six weeks. As I predicted, "She thinks there will be too many grand doings in London, to 'bide there for life." I declare, I absolutely venerate, and feel an almost filial respect for this worthy creature. Humble, low, and circumscribed in her finances, she has, from mere liberality of soul, been the means of diffusing blessings to her little neighbourhood. Though she had not money to assist the necessitous, yet she has worked for some, nursed others, instructed the young ones to read and earn their bread, while she has comforted the old and assisted the sick with cheerful conversation, as well as pious discourse. Her unremitted kindness to the friendless, injured, destitute orphan, who now writes to you, was of so pure and disinterested a nature, that, let me do what I will to render her latter days comfortable, I *never* can be out of her

debt. Well, to have the opportunity of proving my gratitude *ought* to make me perfectly happy. But, dearest Lady Jane,

> The cruel something unpossess'd
> Corrodes and leavens all the rest.

You are that something which is wanting to complete my happiness, and enable me to enjoy the bounties which a beneficent Providence so lavishly spreads before me.

Last night, I slept under my *own* roof, for the first time, and this morning, I have renewed my devout resolution to banish every retrospective thought from my mind, and no longer give way to reprehensible murmuring and regret, since I have so many causes for gratitude. The thorough conviction that an ever watchful Providence superintends and directs all our affairs should silence all complaints, even in the actual moment of suffering; but that is the very moment in which it fails us. If I am less happy than I *might* have

been, I will still be as happy as I *can*. My uncle's return to virtue, and my ability to render the evening of his, as well as of Mary Thomas's days comfortable, are sources of extreme satisfaction to me, and surely, my friend, when this heart takes a transient review of its own sufferings, it will be more apt to expand at another's—more capable of prescribing the relief best adapted to every particular pang. What contrast does the present afford to the past! My God! suffer not riches to corrupt my mind, or to warp my heart from Thee!

Lady Charlotte comes to take me, to wait on the bride, Lady Eleanor Talbot. I cannot in conscience let a blank side reach your hands, after the volume I received this morning; so I shall add to-morrow to its weight—till then adieu!

Having promised to fill the remaining side of my paper, I set down to perform my task, though I am ill-calculated for

writing to-day, owing to the events that have happened, and of which I hasten to give an account to my dear Lady Jane. Alas! my friend, how liable is my unfortunate life to perpetual hurry! After our visit to the bride, we drove to Queen-Square Boarding-School, to ask Lady Julia Bagot, to meet her sister and the two Talbots, on Friday, at Mrs. Egremont's. Imagine my sensations, when I beheld in the school-room my much loved Fanny Banmore! By an involuntary impulse, I sprang forwards and clasped the dear girl to my affectionate heart; but I want words to express my feelings at the instantaneous repulse she gave me—Cold, distant, reserved, she shrunk from my embrace, and making a formal curtsey, quitted the room. I verily thought I should die on the spot—but I had best pass over what I *cannot* describe.

When in the carriage, I gave way to a flood of tears, which, while suppressed, were little short of suffocation. The very child whom I had reared with an almost

maternal care, when her life was very precarious—to whose education I had devoted those hours which might have been spent with her father—for whose sake *alone*, I refused *his* hand, when repeatedly profered, because Lady Clanville had threatened her resentment—and for whom I had experienced every calamity, which disappointment, sickness, poverty and distress could inflict—that *she* should shrink from my touch—fly from my embrace—and withdraw from my sight—was so exquisite a pang, that I only wonder I survived the shock at the instant. Lady Charlotte imagines that Sir Francis *must* have told the child, in general terms, that I had used him exceedingly ill, which I think is most probable; but, granting this, was it natural for one so young—accustomed to receive every mark of tender attachment from me—to be so *readily prepared* for resentment? I think I am hurt for *her* sake more than my own.

Your sister, whose reasonings are always calm, and generally persuade, endeavoured

to console me, by reminding me of my own professions, which were "That I wished Sir Francis *ever* to think me guilty, if the knowledge of my innocence would endanger his peace." 'Tis hard! my friend —'tis too hard, to be condemned by *him* for whose acquittal I could gladly relinquish my life. As Mr. Egremont dined at the Speaker's, I remained with my kind friend till ten, when another surprise completed the horrors of the day.

As the carriage drove up to the house, I perceived that the street-door was open, and three or four servants standing in the hall. What was my astonishment at beholding the infamous Allan in deep conversation with nurse! With indignation, I insisted upon her departing the house that very instant.

The minute I got up stairs, I pulled the bell to know whether my orders were executed. Poor nurse was sadly distressed at seeing the agitation of my spirits, and told me she never was so surprised as when Allan entered the housekeeper's room. She in-

stantly informed her, that she could not possibly ask her to sit down in Miss St. Helen's house. The woman replied that she never meant to sit down, but only called to tell her that she would shortly be summoned as a witness against Lady Clanville, with whom she had again quarrelled; and that, in the moment of passion, she had told Lady Banmore every circumstance of her mistress' scheming tricks, *thinking* that *she* would make her some recompence for bringing the marriage about; but, instead of entering into *her* wrongs, she seemed wholly engrossed by her *own* thoughts; since which, she was grown very melancholy. Sir Francis could not divine the cause of this extraordinary alteration in his wife, which gave him the deepest concern, "nor should he ever have known it," said she, "if I had not supposed that he would *oblige* his sister to do me justice directly."

Sir Francis has exerted his rhetoric to convince Lady Banmore that she was the woman of his choice, and affected to dis-

believe Allan's assertions about the part Lady Clanville had acted; but, unfortunately, Lady Banmore made enquiries of Miss Ford, What was become of the pretty girl who was Fanny's governess! to which she replied: "Oh! Julia St. Helen is a fine lady now, I assure you. She keeps a town-house and elegant carriage, which God and herself know how she comes by." This information has led her to believe that her husband supports the expences of a woman, who must be infamous if she lets him.

Conscious rectitude has enabled me to bear up under my *own* misfortunes; but indeed, Lady Jane, I am unequal to the submission which is required of me *now*. Tell me, can I suffer this unhappy woman to drag on a life of jealousy! I exclaim, with my benevolent linen-draper, "That I pity her from my soul!" I have ordered nurse to get further particulars, as perhaps it will not be impossible to restore harmony, by my writing in private to Lady Banmore. I have not yet thoroughly considered this

idea, but I am determined not to do any thing, without first consulting my friends. I do not at all like the new delay you speak of; if the General had any charity in his nature, he would let you come without him. Sir William's improvement, both in looks and spirits, is beyond what I had dared to hope for. With a thousand loves, I remain, &c.

JULIA ST. HELEN.

LETTER XL.

The same to the same.

NURSE has procured me further information, and you shall hear what has passed. Sir Francis, after endeavouring, but in vain, to persuade his wife that Allan's charge against Lady Clanville was false, and wholly dictated by passion, ordered his hor-

ses for her Ladyship's country-house, where he repeated what her maid had alledged, and demanded to know whether there were any grounds for these extraordinary assertions. At first, Lady Clanville evaded the question, but in a little while, pretended astonishment at his not returning his thanks, *since* he credited the report, as it was no common act of friendship to procure him an immense fortune, at the risk of incurring his displeasure. "I meant to serve you," said she; "or rather to save you from *disgracing* yourself—every step I took, Sir, was with *this* view, and if you are ungrateful, take the consequences." Sir Francis quitted the house immediately, protesting, he never would exchange another word with her as long as he breathed. He drove to the inn, where he was seized with the gout in his stomach, and thought by the faculty to be in great danger. Fortunately, Mr. Ford, who is upon a visit to Lady Clanville, was at the inn at the time, and humanely forgot his resentments, when he heard of Sir Francis's sudden indisposi-

tion. In this interview, he convinced my ever beloved friend, that Allan's information was worthy of credit, from the long and severe illness, under which I had laboured for many months, during his continuance at Paris, the cause of which *he* alone suspected, and time had confirmed—that Lady Clanville's visit to Fanny, which proved the source of all my unexampled misfortunes, was absolutely in consequence of Miss Ford's information, "That she had got a most agreeable neighbour in the charming young woman whom Sir Francis had engaged as governess to his child." Mr. Ford also had expressed some opinions in my favor, which had perhaps created her fears lest her brother should entertain the same favourable sentiments; and beholding me, upon her arrival, in all the advantages of dress, and a heart quite at ease, she had taken the extraordinary aversion to me, which never till *now* could be accounted for.

Sir Francis told Mr. Ford That till this ill-timed information of Allan's, he had

thought most unfavourably of my conduct, which he considered as the very essence of duplicity and ingratitude. Finding Mr. Ford still unmarried, he naturally concluded that I had also deceived *him*, but that feeling offended at Mr. Ford, for seizing on the moment of absence and illness to undermine *him* in *my* affections, he had determined never to admit him under his roof again. He now commissioned him to relate this conversation to me, and expressed the most sincere satisfaction at learning the particulars of my present situation—I feel almost too happy; for, the encomiums which he lavished on Lady Banmore's conduct, temper and disposition, convince me that the knowledge of my wrongs will not affect his peace, and this, you know, was my only fear. He requested Mr. Ford to write a few lines to his wife, desiring her to lose no time in going down to him; but, unfortunately, Miss Ford's intelligence relative to "Julia St. Helen's fine house and elegant carriage," had made the deepest and most resentful impression

upon her mind—"If he wished it, however, she thought his friend in Grovesnor-Square would nurse him *more* to his satisfaction." She is, however, with him now, and convinced of his fidelity. Mr. Ford has been a very conspicuous person in setting every thing in its proper light, and restoring harmony, thank God! I find this breach between Lady Clanville and her maid took place full two months ago. The trial was in some degree of forwardness, but Sir Francis has now quieted this wretch, that he may not see his sister exposed, or the particulars of his reluctance to enter into a new engagement become the subject of conversation. I suppose you know that he is actually appointed to the embassy, notwithstanding the hopes you had entertained of Mr. Talbot's nomination.

A thousand causes unfitted me for appearing at Lady Charlotte's dinner on Friday, to meet the Talbots. The mortification which Lady Julia Bagot saw me receive from her friend Fanny Banmore,

made me wish to avoid *her*, and I am glad I did so, for I certainly should have repented being of the party, as this imprudent girl expressed her very unfavourable sentiments of me, before she had sat five minutes. She asked your sister, "Whether she was well acquainted with the lady she took to Queen-Square?" Lady Charlotte replied: "She is the dearest, most amiable friend I have in the world." "Indeed!" said she—"very odd—Fanny Banmore must be in a mistake—and yet she can't." "Tell me what you mean," said Lady Charlotte; "I do not know what you allude to." "I design it," she answered; for, I am convinced you would not like to keep up an acquaintance with such a person, if you knew her as well as I do—Miss Fanny has told me every thing about her. I assure you, she was a hired governess at Sir Francis Banmore's, and report says, Sir Francis finds her a fine house and equipage, else how could she come by them?"

Mr. Egremont interrupted her: "Very honorably, I assure you; she is as good as she is fair, and had I twenty daughters, I would hold her up to them as the best pattern to copy." "All I say is," replied she, "That Lady Banmore *thinks* differently. She has made a great deal of mischief in that family, which was the reason of Fanny being sent to school. I heard Miss Ford, a very intimate friend of her's formerly, say, That she thought her fineries did her no credit—Mind, Lady Charlotte, I only speak what I hear. You know I never saw her before; therefore, I cannot bear her any ill-will—but Fanny Banmore *must* know, so there cannot be a doubt." Mr. Egremont joined your sister in giving a proper reproof to this too volatile girl, which I hope will be of some service to her in future, and teach her to withhold information that may injure the innocent.

I am this instant requested to take my cloak, and get into your sister's car-

riage. I should be too late for the post, if I left this till my return; so, farewel, my truly loved friend—ever yours.

JULIA ST. HELEN.

P. S. Lady Clanville is dead! the papers mentioned it as sudden—God forgive her as sincerely as I do.

LETTER XLI.

The same to the same.

I HAVE suffered so much anxiety for the last three days, on account of the unhappy propensity which poor Lady Banmore has to jealousy, that I have busily turned my thoughts to seek out some remedy, as, otherwise, she will carry her malady abroad with her. Her husband is absent

for a few days, which induced me to ask Mr. Ford, Whether he thought any step I could take would restore her to peace, since she has so unfortunately treasured up the words of Miss Ford. I told him, That, though I wished ever to avoid meeting with the man I once so tenderly loved, yet I would willingly exert my endeavours to do away his wife's prejudices; and, as Sir Francis was now absent, I would most readily impose upon me the task of explaining the mystery of my situation. I was so elated with the idea that I should meet with success, that I desired him to entreat Lady Banmore, for her own sake, to allow me an opportunity of waiting upon her. After some difficulties, he prevailed on her to believe that she could not be wretched *one* moment *after* she had heard my account of the whole affair, which Allan had designedly perverted.

On the following evening, accompanied by Lady Charlotte and Mr. Ford, who withdrew in ten minutes, I related to Lady Banmore every circumstance relative to the

restoration of my fortune, and reminded her of my coming after *her* service, by mere accident, in the very house of my father. I acknowledged the engagement between Sir Francis and me, and confessed that his apostacy had grieved and distressed me extremely at the time, though her Ladyship *saw* it had not *quite* killed me, declaring it to be my opinion, That a woman has *but* to believe herself ill-used by the object she loved, to recover her peace of mind. I repeated many things of this nature, which my heart alternately reprobated and approved—*reprobated*, as conveying to her the idea that he *could* act ungenerously by a living creature—and *approved*, as aiming at restoring him to her fondest affections. I added, That I had absolutely determined to avoid a renewal of the acquaintance, as, although I had entirely forgot the resentments I certainly felt at the time, yet I thought there must always remain a degree of awkwardness in meetings of this kind. The forced flow of spirits, which I assumed in this interview

would have betrayed me, had not your amiable sister kept me perpetually in check during the whole of this too trying visit—yet, how selfish must I have been, to have considered my own feelings for a moment, when the sacrifice rescued an unhappy creature from the pangs of jealousy.

With infinite satisfaction, I saw that every word I uttered carried conviction to her heart. "If I could," said she, "after your truly generous explanation to me, who had injured you with much uncharitable suspicion, entertain a shadow of doubt upon the subject, your being the friend of Lady Charlotte Egremont, and Lady Jane Harrington, would remove it. From this moment, believe me, I shall ever regard Miss St. Helen with esteem, and to convince her of this, I will instantly acquaint Sir Francis with your generous conduct, which has so effectually counteracted the poison of Allan's assertion, and of Miss Ford's corroborating information." I gave her a thousand reasons why I wished her not to mention a trifling action, which

any liberal mind would have performed; but, seeing that she was absolutely bent upon carrying to her husband this proof of her having abjured her error, both in justice to me, and from the idea that the praises of her former rival would encrease his esteem for herself, I thought the motive so very natural, that I felt more than a common degree of anxiety to remove it, fearing that the same impulse might lead her to promote an acquaintance, which I am convinced I must for ever shun, if I mean to be happy.

Lady Charlotte joined in my earnest entreaty to Lady Banmore, to keep it from Sir Francis, as she verily thought that, after the uneasiness he had occasioned me, I could not derive much pleasure from the interview. She replied, That she should feel mean to herself, were she to suppress an action she thought so perfectly amiable, and she did not see that any unpleasant event could arise from her doing me justice with him. I, however, repeated my wish to avoid him, though I could assure her,

that I bore him no resentment—and God is my witness that I spoke truth. "You know," said I, "Lady Banmore, the quickness of his feelings as well as I do. Transported to find that he possesses your returning confidence and affection, he will hasten to thank me, for having forced a conviction upon your mind, productive of such happiness to himself. Consider for one moment the cruelty of this visit, which is possible, after the unfortunate conjectures of Miss Ford, from which I have already met such mortifications as will not easily be forgotten." She now promised she should not let herself be tempted by any circumstance to divulge an action so calculated to procure me the approbation of the world, since it would also be attended with pain. We then took our leave; fortunately, the little girl was gone to bed—had she been present, I fear my heroism, would have deserted me. Well, Lady Jane, after all the soporifics I have tried in my life, I must confess that the *having done as I would be done by*, has afforded me

a sweeter, more composing sleep than any medicine whatever.

I this instant receive your letter, and feel myself very heartily inclined to second the General's motion; since the delay to your intended journey is likely to afford him such real advantages, I should be very selfish, were I to regret your continuing where you are. My uncle desires me to assure both my loved friends that he cannot accompany me till Thursday week, as he is particularly engaged in an affair which he cannot possibly postpone. Heaven knows what sort of an affair it is, but it has the finest effect imaginable upon his spirits, health, and appetite. For this week past he has been every morning at eight o'clock at the Mount-Coffee-house—he returns to me at eleven—orders his horses at one, and rides till four, when we spend the remainder of the day either at a friend's, or comfortably by ourselves at home.

My paper arbitrarily commands me to

conclude. With love and sincere affection, I remain ever yours,

JULIA ST. HELEN.

LETTER XLII.

Lady Charlotte Egremont to Lady Jane Harrington.

YOUR three letters, my dear sister, reproach me for a silence I have been obliged to submit to from necessity, as our poor friend has really been excessively ill, which with company two days to dinner, and a variety of other circumstances have made me appear negligent much against my will. I am now writing at Miss St. Helen's house, while she is dressing to return with me, being greatly recovered from a very

unexpected hurry, which I am going to relate.

On Tuesday morning, I received a note from Lady Banmore, requesting me to appoint an hour, when I would accompany her, to pay her respects to Julia, as she could not think of leaving the kingdom, without making her personal acknowledgements to her, and presenting her with a ring, which she highly valued. I had, on the preceding evening, promised to carry my work at two o'clock, and sit with her, till Mr. Egremont took me up in his return from the Drawing-room, for which reason, I named that hour to Lady Banmore, and dispatched a note to my friend, to prepare her for the visit. We set off at the time, and found her with as little embarrassment about her as could be expected on such an occasion. Lady Banmore assured her, "That she had anxiously wished for this opportunity, but that Sir Francis had been so frequently of her airing parties, that she had put it off to this day, in which she knew he had an engagement of long stand-

ing." She then presented her with a very rich diamond ring, and said, "She must indulge herself with the hopes of being a privileged visitor when she returned from abroad—ten or a dozen years would certainly remove the awkwardness Miss St. Helen now spoke of, and she saw no reason why they should not be friends at last." Julia's eyes filled with tears, while she replied, "That, as she never had exchanged a word or a line with Sir Francis, since an apostacy, for which he had so good an apology, she should persevere in the same desire of avoiding him, for the circumstances were so peculiarly cruel, that they would return to her mind in his company. "No," said she, "we must be content to esteem each other, Lady Banmore, at a distance: I am indeed, from principle, determined never to renew the acquaintance." . . . . . At this instant, the door opened—Good heavens!—Sir William Ellisborough entered—introducing . . . . . Sir Francis Banmore!!! Julia fainted away . . . the astonished Lady Banmore, conceiving

herself to be the dupe of art, gave way to the most frantic reproaches. Sir Francis heard her not—lost in amazement, he seemed perfectly stupified, while Sir William entreated that somebody would explain to him what mischief he had committed.

I exhorted all parties to be patient, and let *me* procure a solution of the present mystery, as I was the most unconcerned. I almost held Lady Banmore, whose jealousy had returned with increased force, while I asked Sir William, "Why he had introduced Sir Francis Banmore at this critical moment, when his wife was here?" Lady Banmore replied: "To see his mistress, to be sure." Sir William answered: "I did not know that any moment within these walls could be critical. I did not even imagine that this gentleman was acquainted with the name of one individual beneath this roof. I have mentioned my niece Julia to him twenty times, and he never made an enquiry after her. I wished to make the repurchase of Ellisborough-Hall

for my niece, unknown to her, till it was actually done, and therefore, applied to its present possessor, Sir Francis Banmore. The whole business relative to it has been transacted at the Mount-Coffee-house, and having this morning completed the purchase, I asked Sir Francis to witness the effects of a pleasing surprise." Turning to Lady Banmore, "I trust," said I, "that you see how perfectly accidental this meeting is." "Sir Francis, Madam, has too much honesty," said his wife, "to say a word on the subject." Her husband repeatedly assured her that he did not know that the niece of Sir William was a lady he had ever seen before. His astonishment arose from beholding Lady Banmore on a visit to one against whom he thought she entertained strong prejudices. He made a formal enquiry after the dear girl's health, to which she answered in the same distant manner.

I would not suffer Lady Banmore to quit the house in the cruel persuasion of her having been deceived; but, giving a hint to the men to leave us, I repeated all that

Sir William had said, and almost compelled her to look at the parchments they had brought with them. Poor Julia had by this time sufficiently recovered herself to assist me in bringing her back to reason. She assured Lady Banmore, "That, since appearances had given her such just cause for resentment, she wholly forgave and forgot expressions, which had such an excuse. "I again affirm, "said she, "in the most solemn manner, that, till this unfortunate moment, I have never exchanged one word with your husband, since his becoming acquainted with you. If any thing should prevent your going abroad, behold *me* ready to quit England for ever. Why should I blush to own that the tender sentiments I once felt for Sir Francis are *your* security, that I never will renew the acquaintance? Dear Lady Banmore, my heart has a sister's interest in your happiness. I see you are open to conviction—let the sacrifices I am willing to make convince you that I am worthy of your esteem—Yes, I see she is convinced,"

taking hold of her hand, which the other showed no reluctance in giving, "do, my dear Lady Charlotte, seek after Sir Francis—reconcile all differences, and suffer me to enjoy my existence—Lady Banmore will excuse me for retiring."

When she was gone, I intreated this unhappy woman to divest herself of passion and prejudice, and do justice to Miss St. Helen's heart. I exhausted myself in her praises, and advised her, for her *own* sake, not to trifle with her husband's affections. She said she wished to ask his pardon for her suspicions, which the extraordinary confusion of Sir Francis, more than any other circumstance, had produced. She did now truly believe that it was all owing to mere accident only, and she would follow me to express her concern for having suffered herself to be led away in such a manner. I took her into Julia's apartment, who assured her, That, provided her Ladyship did but acquit her husband, as heartily as she forgave *her*, every thing unpleasant would be banished from her memory.

We now went to the study, where we found Sir Francis excessively vexed. His wife said every thing in extenuation, and accounted for her being at Miss St. Helen's house, as having accompanied *me*. I returned to my loved and agitated Julia, after having sent in chocolate, but she earnestly requested me to let Lady Banmore set me down at my own door, instead of waiting for Mr. Egremont, as she imagined my chatting the whole event over again would put both into spirits, and remove any little remaining weight from the mind of the lady.

Julia is now on the stairs; therefore, I hasten to seal this. I propose writing by her, till when, accept and distribute the loves of the *partie quarrée*, which includes your dutiful nephew, who is thriving amazingly. Believe me to be your truly affectionate sister,

CHARLOTTE EGREMONT.

LETTER XLIII.

Julia St. Helen to Lady Jane Harrington.

THOUGH to-morrow will, I trust, behold me an inhabitant of my amiable Lady Jane's abode, yet I cannot deny myself the satisfaction of promoting your pleasures a few hours sooner, with the aid of the postman, and such I know it will be to you to hear me say That your friend Julia *is* happy. Yes, my loved friend, I am now as happy as it is possible for me to *be* —I do not say, to *have been.* I have just learned from Sir William that he was particularly charged by Sir Francis Banmore to deliver into my hands, as soon as he had sailed, the whole correspondence between Lady Clanville and her maid, as the certain means of convincing me, That he merited

not my censure—That, ever since he had become acquainted with the particulars of this extraordinary and unparallelled imposition, he had been anxious to free my mind from the just resentment I must have entertained at his apparent injustice—That he had avoided addressing this necessary vindication of himself to *me*, for obvious reasons; but, judging of my feelings from his *own*, he believed it would afford me no small degree of satisfaction to know that my affections had not been bestowed upon an unworthy object. He also requested Sir William to assure me in his name, That he shall ever rejoice in every happiness that falls to the lot of a person so truly deserving as he acknowledges Miss St. Helen to be.

I asked my uncle for the letter, which he put into my hands. What a weight from my heart! But, strange to say, I feel a greater vacuum than before—it is because he is gone, perhaps for ever. He looked like death, at discovering his wife with me, which prevented my knowing what his

natural looks really were—But I sat down purposely to tell you that I was happy; now for the proof.

Five nights ago, Mr. Egremont was tormented with a vile headach, which the benevolent apothecary came to prescribe for. Lady Charlotte was of opinion that a game at Casino would not be a bad remedy, and therefore particularly pressed Mr. Marshall to stay; but he begged to be excused, as he was under the necessity of going to Lady Banmore's, whose little girl was very unwell, and indeed unable to go with her father and mother abroad. He said that the poor woman was so wrapt up in the infant, that she was half-distracted at the necessity of leaving it behind, as her aunt, Mrs. Mellish, was so taken up with the *world*, that she was seldom at her own house, and consequently, could not see much of the child. He had been after a very excellent nurse whom he knew at Hampstead, but the woman had got a situation, and he was now returning to Lady Banmore, to acquaint her with the unfor-

tunate result of his journey, as her Ladyship was obliged to follow her husband on the morrow, the ship being under sailing orders. I had already tied on my cloak, and now requested a seat in his chaise directly. Need I tell you the rest? I offered to become the nurse of the little girl, and entreated her to deposit the treasure with me. Never was being so thankful—she wrung my hands and placed her child into my arms, before she could utter a word. "My friend!"—was the only kind of eloquence she made use of to win my affections. She had heard of the care I had taken of Fanny, and felt an unlimited confidence in my promise of looking after her babe myself. "Am I not half-silly?" said she, when I was quitting her, "to leave her under your protection, when probably the future master of your actions may dislike the squall of a foreign brat, and send my poor little wench a-packing?" "You speak playfully," replied I; "but *I* answer in earnest, when I assure you that I never design to marry. I do most solemnly de-

clare that I mean to live single—another lover might meet with another Miss Mellish, and I am determined never to run the chance. Seriously speaking, you will find your child, at your return, living with Julia St. Helen, either here, or at Ellisborough. In ten or a dozen years, as you say, my silly resentments to your caro sposo may be done away, and we may be very good friends. In the mean time, this dear little infant will not be sensible of the temporary loss of its parents."

I left her, with the promise of breakfasting with her the next morning, before her departure, when Fanny Banmore meant to throw herself upon my mercy. Loved child!—there is a pleader in this bosom for all of thy name! Accordingly I went, and received every testimony of affection from the dear girl, who repeatedly told me, Her papa would be rejoiced at leaving her sister with *me*, as he often declared that his Fanny owed her life to my care. We settled our correspondence relative to the child, and I brought both Fanny and it to

my own house, as soon as we had seen the tender and satisfied mother disappear from the Square. I detained Fanny for that night, and, on the following morning, restored her to school.

Lady Clanville has left all her property to Sir Francis, except some trifling legacies, one of which gives me great satisfaction, as it proves her feeling some sense of remorse for the cruel injuries she had done me; it is but fifty pounds, yet it shows, as well as five thousand, that she meant to make an attonement.

I have had an extraordinary petition to-day, and one that surprised me, as much as it will you, when you hear that it came from my bitter enemy, Allan! She, to apply to *me*, of all people in the world, for charity! I only wonder at her confidence. She trusted the whole of her ill-gotten property into the hands of an attorney, as infamous as herself—he has absconded—the landlord of the house where she lodged, has seized on her clothes and arrested the woman. Her being ex-

cessively ill has softened my heart, more than any other circumstance, and I have dispatched Madam Nurse after her, more from the satisfaction it will afford this benevolent creature, than from any compassion for this abominable wretch, whose bodily wants are but a secondary consideration with me. I would endeavour at reforming her vitiated mind; for which reason, I propose sending her home to her friends in Yorkshire, who I understand are pretty well settled in the world.

Now, recollect that you are to accommodate me, my uncle, and my new acquired charge, whom Mr. Egremont has already seized upon for his son, in a most arbitrary manner, without asking my leave. Indeed, my loved friend, my most frequent prayer for the last two years has been, That some opportunity of rendering his child a service might make me amends for all my sufferings. Heaven, propitious to that prayer, has made it in a manner dependent upon me. I now feel as if it was worth my while to exist, if only for *its* sake. Yes,

my Jane, my whole soul is *gratitude*. I endeavour to arrange my thoughts into acknowledgement; but the progressive blessings crowd too fast upon my memory, and rob me of expression. I fly to Addison for it, and say, from the depth of my heart,

> When all thy mercies, O my God,
> My rising soul surveys,
> Transported with the view, I'm lost
> In wonder, love, and praise.

You will scarcely know me again, I am so much improved in my looks; for, I now use the infallible cosmetic of a cheerful mind to repair them. I have this instant received a letter from Lady Banmore, concluded just as they set sail, with her own, and her husband's acknowledgements "for my extraordinary kindness to their little girl." She assures me That Sir Francis is, if possible, more pleased at its peculiarly fortunate destination than herself. I propose preserving her letters for your amusement, as she writes uncommonly well. I

must own that she would have furnished her husband with more than common apology, had he been in reality what Lady Clanville had made me believe; for, there is something irresistibly pleasing in her manner, when undisturbed by the apprehension of having lost her husband's affections.

Mr. Egremont has this minute left word that he has settled every thing so as to be able to come with us to-morrow, as well as Lady Charlotte. I know the value of this piece of intelligence to her sister, and therefore shall not add any other article, as it might be overlooked in the joy this arrangement creates. I fear you will not credit me—but I mean to release you from reading another word, after I have assured you that I must for ever remain, My dear friend and *revered mistress*, your *humble servant*,

JULIA ST. HELEN.

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